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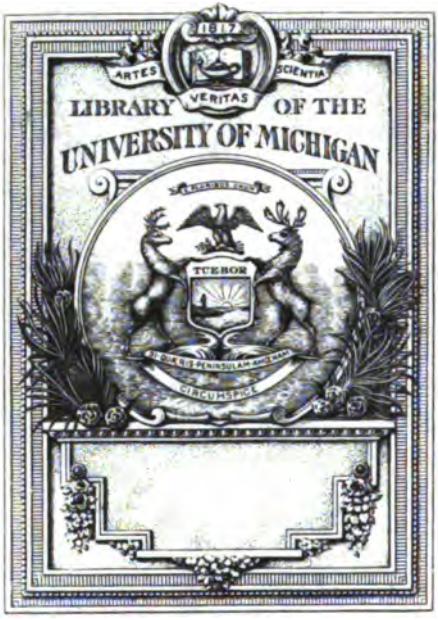

THE GIFT OF
Dean Joseph A. Bursley

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The Works of

CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

With a General Introduction by

JULES CLARETIE

JEAN

Translated into English by

EDITH MARY NORRIS

VOLUME I

THE FREDERICK J. QUINBY COMPANY

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CHAPTER I

In Which Our Hero is Born

A deep silence had reigned for some hours past in the deserted streets of the wonderful city of Paris. The clock on Saint-Paul's church had just announced in booming tones the mystic hour of one; the honest inhabitants of the seventh arondissement, wearied with work or with the pursuit of pleasure were sleeping, or at least had gone to bed, which we feel obliged to confess is not inevitably synonymous.

The populous quarter of the Rue Saint-Antoine was deserted save for a few belated pedestrians kept from their beds by some unfriendly chance, or for those unhappy people whose occupations force them to turn night into day. The first mentioned walked with accelerated speed, which had in it a strong suggestion of fear, and they involuntarily and hurriedly passed to the other side of the street as soon as they saw anyone coming towards them; the second paused before each house to see that doors and shutters were securely fastened and, their mission accomplished, melted into the shadows.

The moon which was then shining, lighted the whole scene. She lighted some other things

also, since there is but one moon for the four quarters of the globe, and she must serve as a lamp to the inhabitants of Europe and Asia while she throws her reflection into the waters of the Nile and those of the Tiber at the same time. Her rays light the vast plains of America and the deserts of Arabia, the smiling borders of the Rhone and the cataracts of Niagara, the ruins of Memphis and the buildings of Paris. One must admit that it is a very small moon to do all that.

M. François Durand, herbalist, of the Rue Saint-Paul, then a man of forty years, who followed his occupation as much from taste as from interest, flattering himself that he knew the nature of herbs better than any botanist in the capital, and becoming very vexed when they called him a seedsman, had been in bed since eleven o'clock, according to an invariable custom which he had never broken even on the day of his marriage; for a dozen years back M. François Durand had enlisted under Hymen's flag with Mademoiselle Félicité Legros, daughter of a cloth merchant in the city.

M. Durand had, then, gone to bed, and he was sleeping apart from his wife for a reason which you shall know later; M. Durand slept soundly because his knowledge of herbs did not heat his imagination to the point of depriving him of his slumber, and his servant Catherine had been shaking his arm and shouting in his ear for some

moments, when at length he opened his eyes and, half raising his head from his pillow, said,—

"What is the matter, Catherine? Why this unseemly disturbance?"

"Do you ask me why, monsieur? and for ten minutes I have been telling you that madame is ill, and is getting worse every moment; we must send for the doctor and the nurse."

M. Durand raised his head altogether from his pillow and pulled up his nightcap a little, for it had slipped over his eyes, muttering, as he looked at the servant in surprise,—

"Is my wife indisposed?"

"Indisposed!" cried the maid, continuing to shake her master's arm that he might not go to sleep again, "indisposed! why, good God! monsieur, have you forgotten that madame expects the birth of her child at any moment?"

"Why, that's very true, Catherine," said M. Durand, sitting up in the bed, "my dream put it all out of my head. You must know that I dreamed that I was in a vast plain where I gathered burdock, and on a sudden —"

"Oh, monsieur, what does your dream matter? I tell you that madame is ill; run quickly and bring the doctor and the nurse — you know her very well, Madame Moka, Rue des Nonaindières. Make haste, monsieur, I must go back to madame, I can't leave her alone."

So saying the servant left the room where

M. Durand had slept for the past few nights in anticipation of this very event. This place served as a storeroom; the walls were garnished with shelves laden with herbs and roots, while others in process of drying were suspended on cords which extended in various lines the whole length of the room. Beneath these aromatics M. Durand was sleeping temporarily, so that when he left his bed one might take him for a perambulating sachet.

"Enough, Catherine, I will go and will do mine errand with all due speed," answered the herbalist, yawning, but when the girl had left the room he remained motionless sitting up in his bed, and muttered to himself, "How singular it is, in sooth, that my wife should be taken ill at this untimely hour; to me it seemeth that such events should transpire during the daytime, but of a verity I am wholly unversed in such matters, though I should be loath to admit the same as to the knowledge of herbs and their properties; those who would catch me tripping there must be vastly skilled, in truth. Of a surety my knowledge doth compass the names of two thousand plants, ah, a vast many more than that, and what is more I have at my tongue's end their Latin cognomens likewise. As to my dream, it was burdock I saw there and on a sudden it changed and I cannot recall the nature of the herb which replaced it."

While thus drowsily reflecting, M. Durand

allowed his head to fall back on his pillow, his eyes closed and he was soon snoring again, no doubt in order to finish the dream so abruptly broken.

Catherine meanwhile had gone back to her mistress, who was growing very anxious for the arrival of the doctor and the nurse, this being her first experience of a common episode in married life.

During the twelve years of her union with M. Durand she had ardently desired to have a child. In the early days of her marriage M. Durand had asserted that there was no hurry about that, for they would probably have more of the little urchins than they wanted, that business was bad, and later on when they had an assured fortune they would be better able to provide for a family, though as a matter of fact the herbalist's means were increasing every day, because his business was really excellent.

But we must return to Madame Durand, who on Catherine's return inquired,—

"Well, Catherine, did you send him?"

"Monsieur was sleeping like a log, but I managed to wake him; and he's going to run as fast as possible after the doctor and the nurse."

"Well, I hope he will hurry. Oh, Catherine, how delighted I shall be to have a child of my own."

"I can well believe it; though it's rather late in the day, after twelve years of marriage. I think

it will be a boy and bet an ounce of snuff on it with Madame Moka, who thinks it will be a girl."

"Be it girl or boy, I shall love it just the same."

"I think I'll go and waken our neighbor, Madame Ledoux."

"Presently, Catherine, but I haven't heard the street door close, are you sure M. Durand has gone?"

"Mercy! he ought to be at the Rue des Nonaindières by now."

"Go and see if he is gone, Catherine."

Catherine, to satisfy her mistress, went back to the storeroom, where as she drew near the bed she heard M. Durand snoring loudly. She was a buxom girl of twenty-eight, lively and candid in her disposition, and having lived for eight years in the herbalist's family felt herself pretty well at home there; so, enraged as she was at her master's going to sleep again, she forthwith pulled off the greater part of the bedclothing under which he was snoozing and threw it on the floor. It was cold, for it was the month of March, and Catherine hoped that the air, which was a little sharp, in striking upon her master, would wake him up more promptly. This expedient was successful; M. Durand, who felt the cold draught strike his body, turned and returned without obtaining any warmth. Finally he opened his eyes and appeared very much surprised at seeing the maid by his bedside and himself with scarcely any bedclothes.

"What does this mean, Catherine?" said M. Durand.

"What do you mean, monsieur? Is it possible that you have gone to sleep again when I told you that madame was ill; when we thought that you had gone to get the doctor and the nurse?"

"Of a verity you are right, Catherine; and in my dream methought that I was at a christening."

"Why, monsieur, it's hardly necessary to think of the christening yet. What is to be done now is to get medical assistance."

"There is reason in what you say; but who the devil can have withdrawn the clothing from my bed in this unseemly fashion."

"I did it, and I swear I won't leave the store-room till you are gone, monsieur; here are your trousers and there are your stockings."

"Well, Catherine, since it doth not alarm your modesty that I should don my apparel in your presence—"

"Modesty be hanged! there's no question of modesty under such circumstances as these."

M. Durand then decided to get out of bed, and throwing aside his cotton nightcap revealed to sight a little head covered with light hair which came nearly down to his eyebrows, fat cheeks, a turned-up nose and small gray eyes. This head was affixed to a body neither large nor small, neither fat nor thin; in short, M. Durand was one of the men one sees often, and whom it would be

difficult to place without hearing what he had to say for himself.

"Here are your braces."

"It is terribly cold to-night, Catherine."

"Come, monsieur, a little quicker; wait, here's your waistcoat."

"And my garters, Catherine, you have not yet handed me them."

"My God! you can go without garters at this time of night."

"Wait, methinks I spy one near the strawberry roots, 'fraga-fragorum.'"

"Let us hope that the doctor will be in; here's your coat, monsieur."

"One moment, Catherine, my cravat."

"Oh, monsieur, all will be over before anyone can get here, unless you hurry."

"Nay, Catherine, there is sufficient time at our disposal. I am somewhat of a doctor myself, and although I have not as yet had children of my own I know something of the matter, and this, I take it, is but the beginning."

"Come, monsieur, you are dressed; run as quick as you can, I beg of you."

"Where is my hat, then? Good heavens, how intense is the cold tonight."

"Run fast, monsieur, that'll soon make you warmer."

"Yet as a precautionary measure I shall wrap this shawl about my neck. Catherine, have a care

for that package of sage, 'salvia, salviæ,' which has fallen from its wrapping."

Catherine's only answer was to push her master out of the storeroom, go down the stairs before him, open the door leading into the passageway, and shut it sharply in M. Durand's face just as the latter was about to go upstairs again to get his handkerchief, which he had forgotten. Certain at last that her master had gone, Catherine ran to knock at the door of Madame Ledoux's apartments on the second floor, and having awakened that worthy matron she went back to her mistress.

Madame Ledoux had become the widow, in succession, of a bailiff, a cabinetmaker and a stationer; by her three husbands she had had fourteen children, six of whom were married and well established. Nevertheless, Madame Ledoux was only forty-nine years of age; she was a big, thin woman who carried herself very upright, always wore a well-frizzed front and an artistically plaited fichu, and was in the habit of asserting that she had refused a fourth husband.

A woman who has had fourteen children must naturally have considerable importance in the eyes of expectant mothers; and Madame Ledoux, who flattered herself that she could at need replace the midwife, was not at all put out in such circumstances. It was a pleasure to her to witness the entrance into the world of an innocent creature, and it rarely happened that they did not call upon

the widow of the bailiff, the cabinetmaker and the stationer to lend her countenance to the proceedings.

At Catherine's first word, Madame Ledoux had answered,—

"Here I am, I will be there directly. I'll slip on a wrapper and go down."

In fact the maid had hardly rejoined her mistress when Madame Ledoux arrived; the dame, with her flat candlestick in her hand, her great height, her white wrapper and her cap with lappets, might have passed for a ghost if she had lived in an old château.

"Well, neighbor, so the time has come?"

"Oh, yes, Madame Ledoux; I think it really has this time."

"So much the better, neighbor; it is much better to be ill during the night than in the daytime, there is so much less noise. My first, fifth and my four last children were born at night. It is one o'clock now, and I hope before morning everything will be well. I was with Madame Dupont, the pork-butcher's wife, on Saturday. I know as much about these affairs as anybody. At the birth of my eighth child (who died of bilious fever, a very fine boy with a Greek nose inherited from his father, the cabinetmaker), I found myself alone as you are, neighbor; I had sent away my maid the evening before because she had robbed me, and my husband was travelling."

"Catherine, hasn't M. Durand come back yet?"

"Come back," said Catherine. "Oh, no, madame, he could not be back yet; but I told him to run as fast as he could."

Madame Durand was greatly distressed that neither the doctor nor her husband had arrived, and her neighbor sought to tranquillize her by citing all her own experiences and all the similar affairs at which she had been present; but nearly three-quarters of an hour had elapsed and nobody had come, and Catherine as well as Madame Durand grew impatient.

Meanwhile M. Durand ran along the street, blowing on his fingers. When he had gone about two hundred feet the herbalist remembered that he had not asked whether he should go first to the doctor's or to the nurse's; he paused, half disposed to return home; however, he reflected that undoubtedly the doctor should be called first, and resuming his speed he moved towards the Rue Saint-Antoine, saying to himself,—

"Zounds! how terribly bleak it is tonight, and Catherine hurried my departure so that I had not time to put my garters on; if my stockings come down I shall infallibly take cold. I do not care to have any more children born in the winter. Now I think of it, 'twas hardly prudent to go through the streets thus in the middle of the night alone. Had I done right I should have awakened my old friend Bellequeue; since he's to be

the godfather, it seems to me he might at least do the errands with me — a godfather is a second father. Now I think of it they robbed a woman in the Rue de Petit Musc about a week ago. Well, they would be sharp indeed to rob me, for I've nothing about me, not even a watch. Well, here am I in the Rue Saint-Antoine; it is really amazing how different a street looks at night, it will be difficult for me to recognize the house. Hum! hum! I fear I've taken cold already. When I reach home I must take an infusion of violets, to which methinks I will add some orange flowers 'malus aurea.'"

While making these reflections M. Durand strode down that side of the Rue Saint-Antoine on which the moon was shining, keeping always at a respectful distance from the side that was in the shadow.

A few steps more and the herbalist would have reached his destination; and he was not a little put out by the fact that it was on the shady side of the way. As he cast fearful glances towards the neighboring houses M. Durand saw a man stop directly opposite the doctor's house. At this sight the herbalist paused abruptly, then he took four steps backward, searching vainly in his pockets for his handkerchief, for he did not remember that he had not taken one. Finally he wiped his face with the kerchief that he had wound around his neck and, with his eyes still fixed on the man

whom he perceived in the shade, he said to himself,—

"As I live there's some one there — 'tis a man, two of the scoundrels perchance; my eyes do not serve me to count very well in the gloom; it must be some dark design which causes them to shun the light. Who and what is that man? My knowledge of herbs avails me not here. This fearsome man hath located himself directly in front of the doctor's house, and I did not take thought to arm myself ere I left my domicile. Catherine hurried me unduly. What am I to do; perchance I had best seek first the nurse — Madame Moka; then I can return here later when the man shall have taken his departure. 'Tis singular, the weather appears to have abated its severity — I am not so cold as I was."

While M. Durand made these reflections, carefully keeping on that side of the street which was lighted by the moon and at a safe distance from the object of his uneasiness, the man who had stopped before the house and who was merely a drunken man looking on the ground and doing his utmost to keep himself from falling on the pavement. Before returning home to his wife he had wished to count what remained to him of his pay, and several pieces of money had fallen from his hand; the poor devil was making vain efforts to find them, muttering from time to time,—

"Confound the darkness, why don't they put

lanterns on the side where the moon doesn't show? I have lost at least fifteen sous, I'd much better have had some more to drink; it's as dark as an oven on these wretched pavements. My wife will flog me, but that's all the same to me; I'll let her hit me on that side where my skin's hardest. If only a friend would come by to help me look. Oh, these miserable legs, which won't let me stand firm. I can't find any more sous than I could put in my eye. They must have fallen into some crevice of the pavement."

At length, quitting his useless search, the drunkard left the place muttering, but without having noticed Durand. The latter felt that he could breathe freely again, as he saw the man slowly walk off instead of coming towards him, and then he decided to go over to the doctor's house, saying to himself,—

"The scoundrel's effrontery failed him; in truth, he dare not speak to me. My severity of countenance hath caused him to renounce his evil designs. Come, am I one to recoil with terror from a mere man? When an heir is about to be born to me I care not for danger. Come, I will advance."

And M. Durand, having assured himself again that the man was not coming back, ran to the doctor's house and, seeing a little bell on the door, pulled it as hard as he could, still turning his head in the direction in which the man had gone. Some-

body opened a window on the second floor and asked him what he wanted.

"It is M. Durand, herbalist of the Rue Saint-Paul. I have come to seek a physician for my wife, who is ill, an accouchement in fact," answered our man in a voice which he in vain tried to keep steady.

"The doctor has gone to see a sick person, but as soon as he comes in I will send him to your house."

"What, he has gone to see a sick person?" said M. Durand, "but it occurs to me that when it is a question of a newcomer of whom I am the father—" The herbalist did not finish his sentence, for at this moment he saw returning towards him the person who had caused him so much uneasiness; the drunkard had paused at a short distance, undecided whether he should return to look for the big sous, when M. Durand's voice struck his ears. He was persuaded that Durand wanted him, that the latter had found his money and was calling him to come and get it, and he started back as fast as his unsteady legs would allow him, shouting in a husky voice,—

"Here I am friend, here I am, wait a bit; that money there belongs to me, wait, I'll soon get up to you."

Durand, who did not care that the man should catch up to him, and who took the drunkard's words for threats, set off running as hard as he

could pursued by that individual, whom he left farther behind him at every instant, though he imagined the fellow was at his heels. He arrived all out of breath on the Rue des Nonaindières; he did not remember the number of Madame Moka's house, but threw himself against a door which he believed he recognized, seized the knocker with both hands, knocked seven or eight times following, as if he wanted to bring down the house and rouse the whole neighborhood; finding that no one answered him quickly enough, he knocked again; several windows opened,—

"What do you want, what is the matter?" demanded several persons with evident uneasiness.

"La garde! la garde! la garde!" answered the herbalist in a voice stifled with terror, and still keeping up his knocking, although they begged him to desist.

"But what do you want with the guard?[1] at whose house? what has happened? is it a fire?"

"La garde! la garde! at my house; la garde! herbalist, Rue Saint-Paul."

M. Durand could say nothing more. He perceived that the man from whom he had fled was gaining ground and drawing nearer to him; he immediately dropped the knocker and ran up the street, made several turns, still running, and without knowing how found himself at length before

[1] The confusion here is caused by the different meanings of the word "garde"; nurse as he meant it, and the guard as they thought he meant it.

his own door, which he opened with a pass key that Catherine had put in his waistcoat pocket, and dashed down his passageway like a man who is escaping from certain death.

Madame Durand's illness had increased; on hearing the door of the alley close loudly, she exclaimed,—

"Here they are at last!" but they saw no one come into the room except M. Durand, frightened, pale, his forehead covered with perspiration, his kerchief loosened, his stockings hanging over his heels, and so out of breath that he could not speak for some moments.

"Why, my dear, you have been running," said Madame Durand.

"Yes, yes, I have assuredly been running," answered M. Durand, looking all around to assure himself that he was in safety.

"The time has seemed long to us, neighbor," said Madame Ledoux.

"And to me also; do you think being out in the street is congenial in the middle of the night?"

"Is the doctor coming, my dear?"

"Yes, madame, yes; everybody is coming, I have done my utmost in the matter."

"Why, what's the matter with you, monsieur?" said Catherine, "you look as if you were all upside down."

"Zounds! the disarrangement of my apparel is the least part of it; I've been attacked and pur-

sued by two or three thieves. Had I not been so strong, as to my legs I mean, they would have made an end of me."

"O my God! my poor husband."

"Why, now, neighbor, that reminds me of when my thirteenth was born; my husband, the stationer, went out as you have done, to get the doctor. We lived then in the Rue des Lions, and you know that the Rue des Lions is a bad neighborhood, oh, it's shocking; it was near three o'clock in the morning, the weather was very bad, it had rained all the evening; my husband in turning a corner heard steps beside him, happily I had had the precaution to make him take his cane —"

At this moment they heard some one knocking violently at the door of the alley; the servant ran down and without giving herself time to take a light, she opened the door and then immediately came upstairs again shouting to the persons who were in the street,—

"Come in, come in quickly, follow me! Oh, it was quite time that you should come!"

And Catherine returned to her mistress.

"Don't be uneasy, madame," said she, "our people have come."

In fact at this moment the steps of several persons were heard on the staircase; presently someone softly opened the door and a corporal, accompanied by four fusiliers, came into the room, shouting in a terrific voice,—

"Where are the robbers?"

At the same instant the crisis supervened and Madame Durand brought into the world a little boy, which Madame Ledoux received in her arms, exclaiming,—

"He will be as strong as my fourteenth."

M. Durand sank back on his chair, looked at the soldiers in surprise and murmured,—

"It's a boy."

"It's a boy," repeated Catherine.

Then the corporal, turning towards his men, who were looking around them in astonishment, repeated,—

"It's a boy."

Everybody — after the first moment given to emotion, to joy, to exclamations caused by the sight of this new person who had come into the world in the presence of the corporal and four fusiliers — began to look at each other and to ask questions, each one finding what he saw very singular. The corporal was the first to cry,—

"Come now, my honest man, have you been seeking the guard to witness the birth of your son?"

"Why, my dear, what could you have been thinking of?" asked Madame Durand.

"The idea of bringing a regiment with madame in this condition." muttered Catherine.

"In fact," cried Madame Ledoux, "I have had fourteen children myself and I have received more

than a hundred in my arms, but this is the first time that I have ever seen such a military confinement."

M. Durand, who had had time to recover from his fright and his surprise, said at length,—

"I made no demand for your services, and I am at a loss to understand why you came."

"We came at the request of two young men of the Rue des Nonaindières who came running to the guard house and begged us to go as fast as possible to the herbalist's in the Rue Saint-Paul. They said he had been waking up all the neighborhood by calling for the guard. That's how it was, master."

M. Durand compressed his lips at the corporal's story, and Catherine turned her back so as not to laugh in her master's face; while Madame Ledoux exclaimed,—

"There is a manifest error, neighbor! you have, without meaning to do so, spread an alarm in the neighborhood."

M. Durand pretended not to understand how this mistake could have arisen. At this moment they heard Madame Moka's shrill voice calling,—

"Show us a light, Catherine, show us a light, can't you? here be the doctor."

"It is high time," said Madame Ledoux.

The doctor and the nurse had arrived, in fact, when everything was over, notwithstanding the fact that Madame Moka had dressed herself on

the way in order that she might assure herself that M. Durand's house was not on fire.

The most pressing thing now was to send away the soldiers, but Madame Durand did not wish that after witnessing her son's birth they should go away without drinking his health, and Catherine was ordered to take them into the shop and to offer them a glass of brandy.

M. Durand followed the soldiers and offered to each one a cup of infusion of violets or lime-tree flowers, but the sons of Mars preferred the brandy.

"Here's to the health of the new-born," said the corporal, raising his glass. The soldiers imitated their superior, M. Durand made a low bow and swallowed a glass of sugared water, saying,—

"To the health of my young son, primogenitus."

"To the health of little Primogenitus!" repeated the corporal, who thought that this was the name of the new-born child.

Catherine jumped with joy, exclaiming,—

"Hang it! this little fellow will be a brave man; it will bring him good luck, his having been saluted right after his birth by soldiers."

The corporal turned, passing his fingers through his moustache, and smiled graciously at the maid.

"And madame's health, aren't you going to drink that also?" said Catherine.

"Certainly, my fine girl," said the corporal, holding out his little glass, "that is only right; we must drink the mamma's health."

M. Durand hastened to make himself a second glass of sugared water while Catherine filled the glasses for the soldiers, who cried in chorus,—

"To the mother's health."

"To my wife's health, 'mea uxor'!" said M. Durand, swallowing a second glass of water.

"Oh, she well deserves that you should drink it," said Catherine, "the poor dear woman!"

"It seems to me," said the corporal, turning towards his men, "that we ought not to forget the papa either."

"That's so, we must drink to the papa," said the soldiers, holding out their glasses, which Catherine filled, while the herbalist decided to make himself a third glass of sugared water.

"Come, comrades, to the papa's health," said the corporal, lifting his glass.

His soldiers imitated him; M. Durand drank with them and bowed low as he said,—

"To my health, messieurs, 'suum cuique,' I drink it with great pleasure."

The soldiers had drunk their brandy to the last drop, and were quite disposed to drink again to the health of a relation or friend; but M. Durand, who had had some trouble in swallowing his third glass of sugared water, hurried to open the door on the street and took leave of the corporal and his people.

While all this was going on, calm had been established in the invalid's room, the doctor had

given his orders and Madame Moka had taken her post. Catherine had kissed the baby, which was wrapped up and laid beside its mother. Madame Ledoux had returned home, and M. Durand, after kissing his wife on the forehead, had returned to bed, saying to himself,—

"This night hath been very perilous for my wife and for me."

CHAPTER II

In Which He is Christened

Nothing further occurred to disturb the few remaining hours of this eventful night, on which so much had transpired in M. Durand's household, the members of which enjoyed tranquilly their well-earned rest.

Very early in the morning, in fact it was barely six o'clock, an odd little gentleman came and rang at the herbalist's door; this individual, who was attired in a morning jacket and flannel trousers, and who wore no hat, was already frizzed and curled as though he were going to a ball. His hair, which was artistically crimped on the top of his head, formed a tuft behind each ear and terminated behind in a rather short but very thick queue, the latter being tied with a wide black ribbon that hung gracefully over the collar of his jacket. This elaborate coiffure was smeared with pomatum and powder, although it was no longer the fashion to wear the latter.

But the individual whose peculiarities and method of dressing his hair we have so carefully described had his professional reasons for sticking to this obsolete fashion, for he was a wig-maker and

hairdresser and he had declared that all the political changes of Europe should never make him cut off his queue.

M. Bellequeue, for this was the hairdresser's name, and he maintained that it fitted him, was a man of thirty-six years of age, with a round fresh face. His nose, though rather large, was not ill-formed; his eyes, although they were rather small, shone like two diamonds, and his mouth, although it was large, was rather agreeable and showed some very beautiful teeth; add to this very black eyebrows, rosy cheeks, a short but well-built figure, a well-turned leg, a reasonable degree of plumpness, and amiable manners, and you will have the portrait of M. Bellequeue, who has a reputation in the neighborhood for being very gallant, a great connoisseur of handsome women, and capable of dressing the hair with as much taste as the hairdressers at the Palais-Royal.

Catherine had opened the shop and Bellequeue entered, exclaiming,—

"Well, my dear, so it's all over and done with. I learned it from the doctor, who was at the house of one of my customers."

"Yes, Monsieur Bellequeue, it's over, thank God!"

"And we have a boy?"

"Yes, monsieur, a fine big boy, altogether a very nice child."

"Whom does he resemble, Catherine?"

"One can't say just yet, although I rather think that he is more like madame."

"So much the better, for Durand is not handsome. I shall be delighted to kiss that baby; I feel that, although it is rather odd that I should. But I am his godfather, and he is my godson, this boy."

"Yes, monsieur, but you can't see him yet, he is in bed with madame, who, I believe, is resting now. So many strange events have taken place tonight. Monsieur brought a corps of the guard here to see madame confined."

"What! soldiers?"

"Yes, monsieur, with their bayonets, too."

"Well, what could Durand be thinking of? Where were his manners? one must always have some regard for propriety. Catherine, I cannot do otherwise than begin such a fine day by kissing you."

"And I willingly let you do it, monsieur."

M. Bellequeue kissed Catherine on both cheeks, then went slowly up to the storeroom to find M. Durand, who was dressing himself.

"Good-day, my dear Durand. Well, so we are a papa, are we?"

"Yes, my dear Bellequeue, that is an assured fact."

"Allow me to offer my sincere congratulations, my friend."

"I accept them with pleasure. I am fully aware,

M. Bellequeue, of your attachment to my family, and I thought, as did my wife, that in choosing a godfather for our child it was our bounden duty to give you the preference, although I have some relations who might deem they had a right to it; but friendship is preëminent in my opinion."

"Believe me, my dear Durand, I am sensible of the honor you do me. I wish to be a second father to your son, I wish that he should love me as much as he loves you; by the way, who is to be godmother?"

"One of my wife's aunts — a retired dyer."

"How old is the lady?"

"About fifty-nine years, a highly respectable woman."

Bellequeue turned away and making a slight grimace, muttered,—

"Two boxes of sugarplums will be sufficient."

Then M. Durand, while making his toilet, related to his neighbor the many events which had occurred during the night.

"You should have come and knocked at my door," said the hairdresser. "I would have gone with you, and you know that I am a good swordsman. I should have taken my cane with a dagger, and we would have waited for these rascals. What are you drinking there?"

"An infusion of lime-tree flowers; I would fain have taken some vulnerary, but as that has failed me —"

"Why, it seems to me that I heard a cry; it's the newcomer, no doubt."

"He's been doing that all night."

"He will have a charming voice, that child. Let us go and kiss him; since he is crying, his mamma must be awake."

M. Bellequeue led the herbalist into his wife's room; she was already arrayed in a very pretty morning cap.

Madame Durand smiled graciously at the hairdresser, who approached the bed walking on his tiptoes. Madame Moka showed him the baby, saying,—

"See how pretty he be."

Bellequeue kissed the new-born child tenderly and examined it closely, while M. Durand advanced and said with a grave air, as he also looked at his son,—

"He has my chin, and the shape of my head."

"Yes," said Bellequeue, "I believe he has something of your looks."

Madame Moka took the child and curtseyed to the godfather, for Madame Moka had intention in all that she did and pretension in all that she said; but when one has had the honor of nursing a general's and a senator's wife, one must necessarily have very good manners; and although Madame Moka was very often mistaken in her use of verbs and ate five meals every day, repeating as she did so that she had no appetite, one

perceived immediately that she was a nurse who did not go into any but good houses.

"And when does the christening take place?" said Bellequeue.

"Tomorrow, godfather, if that is entirely convenient to you."

"Why, my dear lady, you know that I am always ready to wait upon you."

"But," said M. Durand, "hadn't we better wait for a day or two?"

"Oh, no, monsieur, I prefer that the christening shall take place tomorrow."

"I be entirely of madame's opinion," said the nurse, "the sooner one can get it over the better, when once that is over and done with if we wants to be tranquil I sees nothing to prevent it."

"Write at once to the foster-mother, M. Durand; you know, at Saint-Germain."

"Saint-Germain-en-Laye, is it not?"

"Yes, my dear, en-Laye, do not forget, either, the note to inform the family, our friends, and acquaintances of whom I have given you a list."

"It shall be done, madame. Of a truth there is much to be accomplished. My dear M. Bellequeue, if you have a moment to spare, your help in writing all these letters would be grateful to me."

"I'll willingly give it; it's early yet, and the ladies whose heads I dress do not get up so soon."

"Let us go to my office at once then."

M. Durand went down to the shop in which his office was established behind a little glass door.

Bellequeue kissed Madame Durand's hand and followed the herbalist, still walking on his tiptoes, a habit which he had contracted while running through the streets to his customers, at whose houses he did not wish to arrive all muddy. And Madame Moka said as she watched him go,—

"It would be very difficult to find a more courteous godfather."

The herbalist scratched his head as he sat at his desk, and turned his pen in his fingers, saying,—

"I am somewhat at a loss as to the wording of these notes; this being my first-born I have not had as yet the requisite experience regarding such things. If it were a matter of a prescription for a pectoral, or a laxative tea, I should have made an end of it ere this."

"You are something of a doctor, then, neighbor?" said Bellequeue, seating himself also at the desk.

"Oh, I am well versed in the knowledge of simples. I have botanized at Pantin, at Saint-Denis, at Fontenay, at Sevres. When I go into the country I stop at each step and explore every nook and cranny."

"You must have seen a good many things then. Now, as regards my godson, we must write a circular which will do for everybody."

"Surely, a circular will fit our need."

"Although I am a bachelor, I have often helped my married friends on these occasions, and they always commence thus, 'I have the honor to inform you —'"

"Precisely so; I comprehend, it was the beginning only which failed me."

Durand took a sheet of paper and began,—

"'I have the honor to inform you that my wife is safely delivered of her first-born,' is that correct?"

"Very good," said Bellequeue, "continue."

"'The newcomer is a boy.'"

"Perfectly termed."

"'He is lusty and well-formed. All the family are well!' It seem to me that that is very well put and that it tells everything."

"It's worded as though written by a public scribe. I'll soon dash off a good many copies for you."

This business finished, Bellequeue left Durand, promising to see him again during the day; and as the christening upon the morrow would be followed by a family repast, they prepared everything in the herbalist's house to celebrate worthily the birth of little Durand.

Catherine was very busy in her kitchen. M. Durand, obliged to remain in his shop, was already dreaming as to what he should make his son; and while selling camomile or mulberry leaves, he saw him dressed in the robes of an advocate

or the uniform of a colonel. Madame Durand pictured her child tall enough to give her his arm and serve as her cavalier on the promenade; her son would be a handsome fellow, well-built, witty, she saw all that already by looking at the little baby which could hardly open its eyes, and she made plans upon plans. Who does not make them? But those of a mother are the sweetest, dearest plans, and at least they are not always traced on sand.

In the midst of the confusion which reigned in the house, Madame Moka came and went incessantly about the room; she even went down to the kitchen quite often, and, while asserting that "she did not make a god of her stomach," she slipped five big lumps of sugar into her coffee and thoughtfully poured all the cream off the milk into it. Then, a few hours later, she took a cup of bouillon, into which she broke a roll, and she swallowed on top of that a big glass of old beaune wine destined for the invalid; and this she probably found to her taste, as she said,—

"I always has to take some little thing while I waits for dinner. When I nussed the senator's wife I often tooked nothing during the night."

Bellequeue returned in the afternoon. M. Durand had gone up for a moment to his wife, and they were both very uneasy as to what Christian name they should give their son; the arrival of the godfather must naturally decide that question.

"What is your name, my dear Bellequeue?" said the herbalist as he entered.

"What is my name?"

"Yes, neighbor, what is your Christian name? We hadn't yet thought to ask you," said the mother, "and at this moment I am seeking a pretty name for my son."

"My dear neighbor, I am called Jean Bellequeue, at your service."

"Jean? nothing but Jean?"

"Nothing more. But it seems to me that it's not necessary to have a dozen names; the principal thing is to do honor to that which one bears, to have manners, and to be gallant with the ladies."

Madame Durand did not answer, but she made a slight grimace because the name of Jean appeared neither pompous or distinguished and she would have liked her son to bear a name at the same time sonorous and pleasing. As to M. Durand, he murmured between his teeth,—

"Jean — Joannes, yes, an easy name to pronounce; methinks though I should rather have preferred a name which would have expressed something, as for instance, Geranium, Rosarium, or Stramonium."

"Why, neighbor, those names are so devilishly herbal."

"Not at all, my dear Bellequeue, on the contrary, they exhale sweet odors, as I can prove to you."

"Why, monsieur," said Madame Durand, "I don't wish any of those. Is there a Geranium in the calendar!"

"I doesn't suppose that one can find it," said Madame Moka. "Give me Edward, Stanislas, Eugene; them are pretty, them are sweet, them are pleasing."

"Faith, neighbor, you may call your son what you like; as for me, I shall call him Jean, because Jean is a name that is quite as good as any other."

"Certainly, I am far from thinking it ugly — it is only a little short."

"It's the sooner said."

"We shall also see what name my aunt will give him. I believe that she is named Ursule."

"I shall not call my son Ursule," said the herbalist, "I like Jean better."

"Well, we will decide all that tomorrow. At what time is the christening?"

"At noon."

"Very well, I shall be punctual."

"You are aware that you are to dine with us?"

"Yes, my dear neighbor; I will leave you and go and make my purchases."

"Now, no extravagance, M. Bellequeue; no extravagance, I beg of you."

"Don't disturb yourselves, that's my affair; good-by until tomorrow."

Bellequeue left hastily, that he might not listen

to Madame Durand, who shouted to him that she should be very angry if he went to too much expense, and Madame Moka said,—

"I'd be very much astonished if such a godfather don't do everything handsomely."

After a night which they would have passed very tranquilly had not the newcomer declined to hold his peace, which he did not find it convenient to do for five consecutive hours, the christening day began with a pretty little shower of rain or sleet, which froze as it fell and rendered the pavement exceedingly slippery; but, happily, the wet-nurse arrived safe and sound. She was a strongly built countrywoman of twenty-four years of age, whose husband hired out donkeys to the inhabitants of Saint-Germain, while his wife hired out something better than that to the new-born of the capital. On seeing the nurse, Madame Moka declared that it was not probable that the babe would be ill-nourished, and Madame Ledoux declared that she resembled, as one drop of water resembles another, the nurse she had had for her twelfth, which belonged to the stationer.

As to the one whom it concerned most, it is probable that his nurse pleased him also, for he took his nourishment with avidity. The latter would have gone back the same day to her country, but Madame Durand did not wish to separate so quickly from her son; for although putting him out to nurse at four leagues distant from the

capital, she promised herself that she would go and see him often; it was decided that Suzon should remain to the christening, which was fixed for the next day.

M. Durand was attired in black from head to foot, he was quite carried away with his costume, in which he believed that he looked like a doctor. The relations who were invited to the ceremony were not long in arriving. First of all came the godmother, Madame Grosbleu, who went to kiss her niece and present her with the christening cap, which was trimmed with fine lace. Then she went to kiss her future godson, who, so far from yielding to Madame Grosbleu's caresses, uttered the most horrible cries, and moved his feet and his hands, the aunt exclaiming,—

"He is charming, he is the very picture of you, my dear Félicité."

The mother smiled, and M. Durand, who stood a few steps away, bowed low to Madame Grosbleu, as he murmured,—

"Yes, I believe he will be good-looking."

Presently arrived Monsieur and Madame Renard, wholesale hosiers of the Rue du Temple, and cousins of M. Durand. M. Renard had intended to allow them to see that he was piqued at not having been chosen as godfather; but his wife had impressed upon him the fact that it would have been an expensive honor, without counting the birthdays and the annual recurrence of the

christening day, on which a godson never fails to come and greet his godfather. M. Renard having learned that a godson is an indirect mortgage placed upon one's purse, did not preserve his rancor and resolved to look very agreeable.

Later followed M. Fourreau and Mademoiselle Aglae, his sister; M. Fourreau was a harness-maker of the Rue Sainte-Avoie, a connection of Madame Durand. He was a man who held his own very well at the table, but of whom it was necessary to ask nothing outside of the circle of his daily occupation. Mademoiselle Aglae Fourreau, who was approaching her thirtieth year, and who had not yet met a lover, for various and sufficient reasons, was gifted with a vivacity which she sought to enhance by assuming a giddiness which did not always seem natural; but Mademoiselle Aglae still wished to preserve a girlish appearance and, persuaded that gayety, childishness and distraction are the exclusive right of youth, she tried to take off some years from her age by preserving that which was excusable in her at eighteen years of age. Her voice, for she always spoke in a high key, had the effect of a flageolet playing always the same note, without varying to the extent of a sharp or a flat. She laughed at everything that any one said, often at what she said herself; and as it sometimes happened that she laughed on learning some sad news, she excused herself then by saying that she was absent-

minded and that she was thinking of something other than what they were saying, which was very agreeable to the person she was speaking with. For the rest, Mademoiselle Aglae had been sufficiently pleasing at eighteen years of age and she might still have been so had she laughed less often. Two neighbors — of whom one was always thinking himself ill and incessantly having recourse to M. Durand's recipes, being one of his best customers, while the other, a skilled player of dominos, often came to play a game with the herbalist — made up the complement of guests who came to render homage to the newly made mamma and admire the baby, at sight of whom each one repeated the customary phrases: "He's a beautiful child," "Heavens! how large he is," "He will have superb eyes!" To all this M. Durand bowed his thanks, resettled his cravat, and said mischievously,—

"What is done seldom should, methinks, be done well."

Endolori, the neighbor who always had something the matter with him, approached the herbalist, saying to him,—

"Do you mean to say that you haven't yet given him an infusion of herbs?"

"Given whom?"

"Your baby."

"I was much desirous that he should swallow a decoction of pelletory, 'helxine,' a preparation that

is admirable in its action upon the gastronomical passages, but the nurse insists that such a measure would be premature. These women are slaves to routine. But this morning while my wife slept and the woman Moka breakfasted with the foster-mother I took it upon myself to lightly lave the tiny creature's face with elder-flower, 'sambuceus,' water, which hath the great quality of preserving the skin free from eruption. Do you not notice how brilliant his skin hath already become?"

"That's true, one would almost believe that his face was varnished."

At this moment Madame Ledoux came in grand attire and exclaimed at the top of her voice,—

"Good heavens! how you are carrying on in the invalid's chamber. Why, it isn't common sense to have so many people about her; and they'll make her talk, and that won't do her any good. How are you, neighbor, did you have a good night? Let me see the baby. Why how it smells of elder-water. Is there anything wrong with its eyes?"

"Not at all," said M. Durand, "it is merely a little experiment — a precautionary measure on my part."

"What, monsieur, have you washed this dear love with elder-flower water? Have you no common sense?"

"I assure you, madame, it will conduce to his benefit. I am skilled in all the uses of simples."

"Well, monsieur, keep to your herbs and don't make experiments on my son."

"I have had fourteen of them, but I have never used elder-flower like that. My husband, the bailiff, made my first child drink a little wine, but it only made him cough for an hour, and my husband the cabinet-maker wanted to rub my seventh on the back with brandy so as to develop him, but he was hunchbacked when he died; and then my thirteenth, whose father was the stationer, seemed as if he would have very weak sight and we put poultices on his eyes and the poor little thing died blind; those are the only experiments that I have made on my children. But everybody is here; who are they waiting for?"

"Why, for the godfather, my dear friend."

"Why, that's so, the godfather, of course."

"And my cousin, M. Mistigris, the professor of dancing. I shall be very sorry if he fails to come, he is such an amiable man; his fiddle is always at the disposition of his friends, and you know how he plays the contra-dances, with what taste, what finish."

"Yes, yes, ha, ha, ha! It's very funny," said Mademoiselle Aglae, shouting with laughter.

And Madame Ledoux answered,—

"I think I heard him play once in your shop. In fact, he has a very fine knack with the fiddlestick. Before coming in I thought that you had at least four blind people at the house."

"I think the violin grates on the nerves," said M. Endolori in a low tone to M. Durand.

"Yes," answered the herbalist, "for which as a remedy a few pinches of peppermint, 'menta mentae,' may be used, that herb being anti-spasmodic in its nature."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of a little gentleman about four feet seven inches in height, who bounded lightly into the room with the lightness of a zephyr, and took two dancing steps up to Madame Durand's bed. This airy début has no doubt caused the reader to guess this personage was none other than M. Mistigris, the professor of dancing, who, although he was then forty years old, could not keep his feet on the ground. His body was continually in motion, and the expression of his countenance indicated that his calling was that of a man who had pirouettes incessantly before his eyes.

"We were speaking of you, my dear cousin," said Madame Durand, holding out her hand to the said cousin, who kissed it as he held himself on one leg. "I was afraid that you were not coming."

"I promised you to be here with my fiddle at noon, and here I am. I had some lessons which kept me a little; but I said, in less time than it takes to dance a two-step I shall be there. The pavement, however, was very slippery, and I saw more than one individual fall on his back. Good-day, Durand, but where is the baby?"

"He's here, monsieur," said Madame Moka, "wait till I lift him up."

"What do you think of him, cousin," said Madame Durand.

"Oh, I don't think a bit about his face, let me see his legs."

"Impossible now, he is swathed and dressed for the christening."

"Well, when I see his legs I'll tell you at once what kind of a man he'll be, for you must not deceive yourself, cousin, the legs are the point of view for which one must judge every one. Calves more or less thick, or well- or ill-formed are unfailing symptoms of wit or of talent."

"Ha, ha, ha! What, wit in a calf?" said Mademoiselle Aglae Fourreau, swinging herself around.

"Everything is there, mademoiselle; I even place the soul there."

"As for the soul, cousin," said the herbalist, gravely, "Hippocrates places it in the left ventricle of the heart, Erasistratus, grandson of Aristotle, in the membrane which envelops the brain, and Strabon between the two eyebrows."

"Well, cousin, if these gentlemen place the soul in the chest, in the brain, or between the eyebrows, it seems to me that I can just as well place it in the calf; each one to his own system."

"Once more, gentlemen," said Madame Ledoux, raising her voice above that of the gentlemen, "you make too much noise, you talk too

loud; my neighbor will have the headache and lose her hair as I did with my sixth, who belonged to the cabinet-maker."

"I seen the godfather," said Madame Moka.

At the announcement of the godfather, calm was re-established in the room, the relations wishing to scrutinize closely the one who had been judged worthy to hold the new-born at the baptismal font, and each one was curious to see what he was going to bring to the godmother and to the mamma. M. Bellequeue appeared in a blue dress coat, of which the buttons shone like so many little mirrors, a waistcoat of white pique, and black breeches; for it is well that it should be noted that they still wore breeches in 1805, and that it was at that epoch that the events which we have the pleasure of relating to you were transpiring.

Bellequeue, whose hair was dressed with particular care, had his three-cornered hat in his hand, and held under each arm boxes of sugar-plums; the smallest packages, tied with ribbon, were suspended to his fingers and a fine bouquet was attached to one of the boxes of bonbons.

The godfather, while somewhat embarrassed by all his parcels, came into the room wearing at first that grave air which one affects sometimes to hide one's awkwardness, and which never deceives anybody but fools; but returning presently to his habitual expression, Bellequeue smiled at every-

body, then advancing towards the invalid he presented her with four boxes tied with blue ribbon and a little package which held four pairs of gloves.

"I was certain that you would commit some extravagance," said Madame Durand, glancing sidelong at the hairdresser, who drew from his right pocket two little pots of preserves, and presented them to her saying,—

"That is for the stomach."

"Something more? I shall be angry with you, godfather."

"And this is for the chest," said Bellequeue, drawing from his left pocket half a bottle of Scotch whiskey.

"Oh, this is too generous."

"Here is the godmother, my dear Bellequeue," said the herbalist, presenting Madame Grosbleu, who made a deep curtsey to the godfather. The latter then presented the godmother with a handsome bouquet, then four boxes which he had decided to buy her, as well as the little package of gloves; but while Madame Grosbleu was admiring the godfather's presents Bellequeue approached the invalid and found means to say to her in a low voice,—

"Her gloves are from Grenoble and yours are Parisian; your plums are vanilla with a good deal of pistachio, and hers are nothing but hazel nuts."

Madame Durand replied to all this with a mischievous look, and Madame Moka exclaimed, as

she dipped her five fingers into one of the boxes that Madame Grosbleu had opened,—

"This is what you may call a christening; I doubt if any one have seen a finer."

"By the way, my dear aunt, what is your first name," said Madame Durand.

"Jeanne, my dearest, don't you remember that they always called me Jeannette."

"It follows that our godson must be named Jean," said Bellequeue, "however, if his mamma wishes to add a second name, why not let it be Stanislas? I like that name very much."

"Jean Stanislas, so be it! But come, it is time to start."

"The two carriages are at the door," said Catherine.

"Is everybody going to leave me?" said the invalid.

"I be immovable from you, madame," said Madame Moka, sucking a big sugar-plum which she had thoughtfully secured.

"I'm afraid that the carriage will upset me," said M. Endolori.

"Ah, that would be very pleasant at a baptism," said Mademoiselle Aglae.

"One moment, until I regulate the order of march," said M. Mistigris, who, after admiring the godfather's legs, had gone to cut some capers in the dining-room, "let each give a hand to one of the ladies and then all march in step," and

M. Mistigris took his fiddle, on which he placed a bridge and began to play "une fievre brulante," of Richard's, walking after the company. His intention was to have placed himself on the seat of the carriage beside the coachman and to have played a dance to the horses, to try and make them trot in time. But as snow was falling he decided to get inside the carriage which contained the child with his nurse, the godfather, the godmother, Mademoiselle Aglae and M. Renard; and in order to charm the company he played waltzes all along the way, which the baby accompanied by his screams. We will not follow the company to the mayor's office and to the church. Every one knows what a christening is, and this one would have been in no way different from any other had not M. Mistigris wished to play a minuet in the church, in which endeavor he was frustrated. At length, having duly stated that on the fifteenth of March, 1805, a son had been born to Monsieur and Madame Durand, united in lawful marriage, the new-born infant was named Jean Stanislas. The first name, being much easier to pronounce, pleased the nurse best and she invariably called the child Jean, so that the latter became accustomed to answer only to that name, which later he kept because it flattered his godfather; but we shall hereafter do as did the nurse, and we shall call our hero simply Jean; finding, like M. Bellequeue, that this name is as good as

any other, and that as there are Jeans of all kinds there must necessarily be some very witty, very amiable, and very honest. We shall see later on in which class we must place our Jean.

They got into the carriages again. M. Bellequeue constantly held his hat in his hand, even when alighting from the carriage, and the sound of M. Mistigris' fiddle announced the return of the company.

It was nearly three o'clock and the breakfast, or rather the dinner, had been served in the invalid's room, for she wished to be present at the feast, although Madame Moka had told her that she was afraid that it would tire her head. Catherine had surpassed herself, and the fumes of the first course agreeably tickled the olfactory organ.

Madame Durand had designated the places of the guests, and not wishing that Bellequeue should be beside Mademoiselle Aglae, she put him between the godmother and Madame Renard. Mademoiselle Fourreau was therefore obliged to laugh with M. Endolori and the domino player, who was as cheerful as a double six.

During the first course nothing was heard but the clatter of plates and forks, and the sound of M. Mistigris' feet, for while eating he tapped them on the floor. At the second course the conversation began; while tasting new dishes and discussing the herbalist's old burgundy, compliments upon the beauty of the baby and the virtues which

he ought to have if he followed his parents were the order of the day ; Mademoiselle Aglae laughed in M. Endolori's face when he advised her not to eat too many anchovies because he deemed them irritating, and the latter worthy prudently refused to touch the mushrooms when he found any in the dishes served to him. As to Bellequeue, he ate and drank almost as much as Madame Moka, who dexterously cleared her plate of everything that was put upon it, and presented it anew to each dish that was served, remarking with unfailing regularity,—

" I only wants just a little taste of it."

Madame Ledoux ate little, and was always talking about the children she had had by the bailiff, the cabinet-maker and the stationer. M. Renard listened with an amiable expression ; Madame Renard said nothing, and calculated what each dish must have cost. M. Fourreau did nothing but gobble, swallow and drink, the domino player did not refuse a single dish, and M. Durand awaited patiently the serving of a dish of whipped eggs in which unknown to Catherine, he had put an infusion of herbs which would, according to his calculation, give them an excellent taste.

The whipped eggs were at length served to the guests. The herbalist said nothing, but smiled when everyone seemed surprised at the taste of them and they looked at each other as if asking what it could be.

"I will inform you as to this dish," cried M. Durand, "for methinks you will guess long without finding the secret of it. 'Tis a mixture of simples, of herbs excellent for the blood and at the same time aromatic and strengthening, of which I myself made a little extract which I mixed secretly with these eggs in order to give your palates an agreeable surprise. I am assured that even at the court no one hath anything similar."

"Why, it's delicious, is it not?"

The guests looked at each other murmuring,—

"Yes, it is odd; it is a very peculiar taste."

"In the compounding of simples I am unequalled, you will find it grow on the palate with each morsel you taste."

"It is singular, I don't like it at all," said Bellequeue.

"Nor I," said M. Mistigris, cutting a caper under the table, and sending his leg against that of Madame Renard, who did not know what to make of it, because it was the fifth kick she had received since the soup.

"And I don't think it smells very good," said Madame Moka.

The other guests were like M. Bellequeue and did not finish their whipped eggs; but M. Endolori, having heard that it was good for the blood, demanded a second helping and also a third when he heard that the dish would preserve him from many maladies.

Happily, M. Durand had not made any experiments on the dessert, and they forgot the entremets aux simples, in drinking to the health of the new-born and his parents. The champagne sparkled in the glasses; Mademoiselle Aglae shouted with laughter because the cork hit Madame Renard in the nose; Bellequeue refilled the glasses; and Madame Moka, having drunk her own, also drank her neighbor's, and then exclaimed,—

"Oh, heavens, has I mistook yours for mine?"

"What are you going to make of my godson?" asked Madame Grosbleu, "have you made any plans yet, my dear Félicité?"

"My dear aunt, I wish that he should be a fine young man; as to his occupation, we shall see later on what he has a vocation for."

"Above all, take care to let him learn how to dance early," said M. Mistigris, "that is the way to develop his body and his judgment."

"Why should you not make my godson an honest soldier?" said Bellequeue, who had served in the army and still spoke with pleasure of his campaigns. "Ha, ha, one obtains advancement quickly now; if he enters the service at eighteen I wager that at twenty he will be a captain."

"Oh, M. Bellequeue, would you like to get my son killed?"

"No, my dear neighbor, I only say that there are great prospects for advancement in the military occupation today."

"I wish that my son should be a learned man," said M. Durand. "I shall induce him to botanize for four or five years and when he hath learned thoroughly the nature of simples his education will be accomplished."

"You must buy him a box of dominos," said the neighbor, "there is nothing which will teach him to calculate quicker."

M. Endolori said nothing for some moments, he did nothing but wriggle about on his chair and make grimaces, the three plates of whipped eggs with herbs which he had eaten seemed to make him feel very uneasy.

While waiting until little Jean should be a learned man or a hero, M. Bellequeue proposed a bumper to his health; but M. Endolori did not drink. He whispered a few words in the herbalist's ear, who answered him,—

"A proof that its effect upon you will be benign."

M. Endolori, not wishing to exhibit these proofs to the company, rose and left the room, bent almost double; however, the gayety became noisier, Bellequeue wanted to sing, Mistigris wanted to dance, Mademoiselle Aglae did not stop laughing, Madame Moka made some coffee with brandy in it for the third time.

Madame Durand confessed at length that she felt a little tired and the company thought of leaving; they said good-by, they kissed her and

they left by the shop, in which M. Mistigris proposed to dance a gavotte with Mademoiselle Fourreau, but as it was very cold there everybody preferred to return home. Endolori, who reappeared at this juncture, seemed hardly able to walk and begged M. Durand to assist him as far as the door. The herbalist led his neighbor home, assuring him that he would find himself perfectly well the next day, and returned to take a little rest, still racking his head as to how he should manage to give his son a love for simples.

CHAPTER III

A Journey in an Omnibus. A Visit to the Nurse

In spite of his mother's tears, Baby Jean, aged three days, in accordance with the usual custom quitted the paternal roof for that of nurse Suzon Jomard on the day following the memorable one of his christening. In his new home, though as yet he was too young to value the full extent of his privileges, he found three little comrades whose united ages hardly amounted to six years, without counting the one who had just been weaned. It was very evident that in addition to hiring out his donkeys and cultivating his land, Father Jomard did not neglect his duty as a good patriot.

Madame Durand's grief and tears had been very profuse as she kissed her tiny son before parting with him, although her husband, the worthy herbalist, in vain endeavored to make her understand that Saint-Germain was not in India, and that, although they could not get there in a steamboat, there were a thousand ways of being transported thither within a short space of time. She absolutely declined to listen to his well-meant attempts at consolation.

A mother is extremely averse to listening to that which tends to prove that she is wrong in weeping for her son, besides, Madame Durand had not the habit of listening very attentively to what her husband said. Suzon departed loaded with presents, and carried a layette which would have served for a little duke (though one thing is certain — no little duke could have been better formed than was little Jean). Suzon received from the mamma every injunction which maternal tenderness could inspire; she was enjoined, above all, not to allow the baby to cry, and she gave her solemn promise to that effect; which did not prevent her from allowing M. Jean to cry during the whole of the journey to her home.

M. Durand would have liked also to give his orders to the foster-mother, but his wife made him understand that a man should not meddle with a child until it has been weaned. The herbalist acknowledged the justice of this remark; however, he secretly conveyed to Suzon a package containing violet flowers, mallows and poppies, and recommended her to make his son take an infusion of them every time that she saw him sneeze. Suzon promised again, and on arriving at home she gave the package of flowers and seeds to her rabbits, which, however, had not sneezed.

All this must not make you imagine that Suzon was a deceitful woman and a bad foster-mother; on the contrary, she took great care of her nurs-

lings, to whom she was sincerely attached. But she resembled the greater number of these foster-mothers, who think that they know much better how to bring up a child than people in Paris; and who after listening very calmly to all that the parents say, never bother their heads about it afterwards.

The invalid's convalescence progressed favorably, and at the end of a fortnight Madame Moka was dismissed. As she had been highly satisfied with the baptism and the meals she had had at M. Durand's, she did not leave without announcing that she should come often to inquire after madame's health.

At the end of three weeks madame was perfectly well again, the roses had returned to her cheeks; for although she was in her thirty-fifth year, the herbalist's wife was a pretty brunette, very pleasing, and possessed of a freshness and plumpness which often attracted compliments from the customers, above all when Bellequeue had dressed her hair to harmonize with her features, which he was very skilled in doing.

Madame Durand was very desirous of going to Saint-Germain to kiss her son, but the doctor had forbidden her to go out too soon; it was April and the weather was cold as yet. Madame Durand would have braved the rigors of Siberia to go and see her child, but her husband brought their neighbor Bellequeue that he might make her hear

reason. Bellequeue came as usual on his tiptoes. Having greeted his neighbor in the most gracious manner, he declared that it would be highly imprudent for her to go into the country as yet, and besides they had received news of the baby which informed them that he was in perfect health, and consequently it was unnecessary for the mother to make herself ill because of her affection for her son. At that Madame Durand exclaimed with a sigh,—

"Ah, M. Bellequeue! you are not a mother!"

"No, but I am a godfather," answered the hairdresser, "and I flatter myself that I have the greatest love for my godson."

"And I, madame, you deem me of no consequence in this matter; but it occurs to me, notwithstanding —"

"Yes, monsieur, but you are so cold, so insensible to the happiness of possessing a son; you think of nothing but your herbs. Dear little fellow! he must have grown so by this time and become so pretty and engaging."

"Do you imagine, forsooth, that he hath acquired the faculty of speech."

"No, monsieur, oh, no; not as you understand it. But with me it is different; there is a silent language by which a child makes the heart of his mother understand. Well, I will wait a week longer as you wish it; after that I shall listen to nobody. I shall go and see him."

And to indemnify herself for the time which must elapse before she should see her son, Madame Durand talked about him from morning till night. With Catherine she dwelt incessantly on her plans for Jean's future, and to everybody who came into the shop she said a word or two about the beauty of her child. She did not give one ounce of pearl barley, a package of linseed, a leaf of chard, without saying,—

"You know, it's a boy, a beautiful boy; his eyes are as big as that, and little dimples in his cheeks — a cupid, a veritable cupid."

Many people who had no thought but for their malady or maladies would absently reply to this,—

"Madame, must this be boiled a long time? Must we make it thick? Is it good for a cold?"

And M. Durand, who was afraid that his wife while talking about his heir would give millet for barley, and wild poppy for chard, would hasten to the counter, saying,—

"Have a care, my dear Félicité, 'festina-lente,' don't take one thing for another; this is sweet marjoram, 'amaracus,' and that is houseleek, 'sempervivum.' Assuredly our son is a very fine boy — that is good for cuts — and he shall have, I promise you, a perfect education — let that boil five minutes only — but you must not give madame an emollient instead of an astringent, and vice-versa."

A week elapsed, but Madame Durand being

troubled with sore eyes was obliged to delay her journey. A woman who is still good-looking does not care to show herself in a public coach with eyes as red as a cock's comb, and the herbalist's wife believed that her eyes were her strong point, in which she was justified. Besides, Suzon wrote, or rather had somebody write, every week to little Jean's parents, and informed them that her nursling was growing like a mushroom, that he was blooming and plump, and evoked the admiration of the country round by his liveliness and his smart replies. It is probable that these replies were in pantomime, because a baby of six weeks is not accustomed to answer 'ad rem'; but if one were to take literally all that these foster-mothers tell us, one could often believe that a baby of fifteen months was capable of singing in the choir or of taking part at a game of piquet.

At length the sore eyes were healed. Madame Durand was very well, her son was now almost two months old, and nothing more opposed her going to see the baby. The day was fixed; they had not written to Suzon of the visit they expected to pay her, because one likes to surprise the nurse. So, on a fine morning in the month of May, Madame Durand having made a toilet which was partly that of a stylish woman and partly that of an Amazon, she kissed her husband, who was not going with her to Saint-Germain because they could not both leave the shop, and awaited god-

father Bellequeue, who had offered to serve as her cavalier, being delighted himself at the prospect of seeing his godson again.

The mamma began to get impatient because it was already nine o'clock and they should have been at the coach office; M. Durand told her to avoid the draughts, and gave her a box of jujube paste for his son. At length, Bellequeue arrived, hat in hand; the herbalist bade him take care of his wife, and Bellequeue swore to watch over her as though she were his own wife, and waved his cane in the air as though he were about to beat a retreat.

Madame Durand took the hairdresser's arm, and they reached the quays, saying,—

"How pleasurable it is to go to the country to see our little Jean, to breathe the pure air. We are going to pass a delightful day."

Presently they reached the omnibuses. As in 1805 the Parisians had fewer conveyances, no draisiennes,[1] no velocipedes, no fast coaches, the mamma and the godfather very contentedly took an omnibus, into which the conductor almost obliged them to mount by force, assuring them that the complement of passengers was made up, and that it would start immediately.

However, only two places at the end of the

[1] The draisienne, invented in 1818, by Baron Drais de Sauerbron of Mannheim, a bicycle propelled by the rider's pressing his feet alternately on the ground.

vehicle were occupied, by a young man and a grisette who were talking in low tones and appeared rather vexed at the arrival of travelling companions; they had hoped, perhaps, that they would go tête-à-tête to Saint-Germain. The young man pressed against his neighbor to make a place for Madame Durand, for the coachman had said in the voice of a stentor,—

"There is room for three on each bench and four at a pinch, when some of them are children."

Madame Durand, however, could by no means pass for a child. She settled herself back in her seat, which almost obliged the grisette to put herself on her companion's knee, but the young man did not complain. They placed the bar of wood which served as a back to the second bench, and Bellequeue seated himself in front of Madame Durand, who exclaimed,—

"Well, we are going to start? why don't we start?"

"Come, coachman, my good fellow, let's get along," said Bellequeue. But the coachman had gone off to run after the passers-by in order that he might fill his omnibus, which was still going to start immediately.

Five minutes rolled by, and still no coachman. Madame Durand incessantly repeated,—

"Good heavens, we shall get there so late that I shall not have time to kiss my boy."

"Is the clown mocking us?" said Bellequeue, thrusting his head outside the omnibus.

"Have you been waiting here long, monsieur?" asked Madame Durand of her neighbor.

"Faith, madame, we have been in the omnibus for a good half hour," said the young man smiling.

"Half an hour! It is shameful! Let us get down, my dear Bellequeue."

"Here they are at last. Don't excite yourself."

In fact the coachman came up at this moment with a young man whom he had snatched from one of his comrades, and whom he almost threw into the omnibus beside Bellequeue, as he said,—

"Don't I tell you that it is full, and that we are going to start."

The young man, whose accent and figure caused one to recognize him immediately as an Englishman, glanced around him with surprise, not having yet recovered from the manner in which he had been thrust into the 'bus, and looked ill-humoredly at his necktie, one of the ends of which remained in the hands of the coachman.

"Well, I hope we are going to start now," said Bellequeue to the conductor.

"Why, of course, master, there is no doubt about it."

"Come now, coachman," said the young Englishman, putting his hat on, "you haven't told me the price."

"That's all right! Be easy, my lord, it is always the same. Don't be afraid, I am a good fellow."

So saying, the coachman ran after a nurse, whom he saw among some of his comrades, and Bellequeue shouted to him angrily,—

"We wish to start immediately."

"Monsieur," said the Englishman, addressing himself to Bellequeue, "will you kindly tell me how much the 'same thing' amounts to?"

Bellequeue looked at the Englishman, and racked his head to understand what he said, then he turned to Madame Durand and said at length,—

"I don't quite understand."

"I asked you how much of the 'same thing' the coachman wished to make me pay."

"Oh, I understand. It is the price of the omnibus that you wish to know?"

"Yes."

"It is twenty sous when one bargains, and twenty-five when one doesn't."

"Is it customary here for coachmen to carry travellers by force to their omnibuses?"

"Did they bring you by force?"

"Yes, he fought for the possession of me with another. He seized me by the necktie, saying that I should be very much pleased with his little horse. Happily the cravat tore, or I should have been strangled when this fellow dragged me off."

"Certainly," said Bellequeue, "their manner of

inviting one to get into their omnibuses was rather lively."

"But we are not starting," said Madame Durand, "and it is past ten o'clock. I shall make myself ill with impatience. Let us get down."

"I am first going to flog this rascal here," said the hairdresser, brandishing his cane outside the omnibus, and he was about to descend from it when the coachman arrived leading the nurse in triumph, and as she came up the steps she butted Bellequeue with her head and tumbled him back again on his bench. The nurse placed herself between Bellequeue and the Englishman, and the coachman handed her nursling to her as he remarked to the passengers at large,—

"We are going to start at once. In a second we shall have passed the barrier."

"Hang it, coachman, if you don't start immediately," said Bellequeue angrily, "I shall have something to say to you about it."

"Don't be excited, master, the 'bus is full, and I hope we shan't be long now."

The driver decided to shut the omnibus door and mounted to his seat. but still he did not start; he sat looking to the right and left, and shouting at the top of his voice,—

"A rabbit, a rabbit,[1] for Saint-Germain."

"What does he mean by calling for rabbits," said the Englishman to the nurse.

[1] A lapin (rabbit) is the passenger who sits on the box beside the driver.

"Why, hang it," she answered, "there's nothing unusual about that; he naturally wants to make up his complement of passengers."

The Englishman, who could make nothing of this, turned away and said nothing more.

Madame Durand, who was looking at the baby carried by the nurse, said to Bellequeue,—

"What a difference between this child and mine!"

"As much difference as there is between a wig and a queue," answered the hairdresser.

As to the young people who were seated at the back, they kept themselves apart and did not speak to their neighbors, having quite enough to say to each other. Bellequeue, finding that the omnibus did not start, was about to take the driver by the collar, when an ill-dressed little man, holding under his arm a parcel wrapped in a red handkerchief, mounted on the seat and took his place beside the driver, after respectfully bowing to the company. The coachman then decided to start and the omnibus rolled along, but only for a few steps, and the coachman continued to shout,—

"Another rabbit for Saint-Germain, it is the last seat that's filled, then we shall go."

"What do you mean, you rascal. Are you still waiting to take some one else?" said Bellequeue.

"Why not? I must earn my living."

"Do you want to make your horse draw nine people?"

"Why, at least nine, he often draws a dozen of them."

"We shall not get to Saint-Germain this morning."

"Leave me alone for that. When once my horse starts he goes very quickly. A rabbit."

Presently a countrywoman mounted beside the coachman, who whipped up his horse; the omnibus rolled off at last on the way to Saint-Germain, and Madame Durand sighed as she said,—

"It's such a relief to know that we are off."

The young neighbors sighed also, but theirs were speechless sighs, and the nurse said to the Englishman,—

"Now, you see, he's found two rabbits." But the Englishman, thinking that the nurse was laughing at him, turned his head ill-humoredly, and would not open his mouth.

The countrywoman on the box opened a conversation with the driver, in which the nurse also occasionally took part.

Bellequeue ogled the grisette, and then he ogled Madame Durand. The little man who sat with the coachman had untied the red handkerchief which he had held at first under his arm, and had taken therefrom a worn pair of breeches which he was turning, for the little man was a tailor and he was carrying the breeches to one of his customers at Saint-Germain. He managed to sew on the buttons by the way. He also took out of the

package a snuff-box, and he offered snuff to everybody in the omnibus; but in thrusting his arm toward the back to present his snuff-box open to Madame Durand, a violent jolt made him jump, and the snuff dropped into the Englishman's eyes. The latter did not take the thing in good part, and after he had rubbed his eyes he seized the little tailor by the collar, and wanted to punch his head. Bellequeue interposed to keep the peace, while the coachman shouted to the Englishman,—

"You had better not try to beat my rabbit. You're ugly, if you are a lord."

At last they came to an understanding. Everybody sneezed, because the coach was like a plug of macouba, and they reached Nanterre saying, each to himself, "God bless you!"

The coach stopped. The coachman got down and gave his hand to the countrywoman. The little tailor escaped with his breeches and disappeared behind a house, fearing perhaps that the Englishman might take a fancy to begin punching him again. The cakes, the native product of the country, arrived in abundance.

"Let us get down," said Bellequeue to Madame Durand.

The latter saw with dismay that they had stopped, but the horse needed to get his breath. She got down sighing, and said,—

"We shall not be at Saint-Germain for an hour."

This time the young people on the back seat

got down also, but instead of entering the inn, like the other people, to eat cakes and drink ratafia, they walked slowly down a lane and lost themselves in a kind of quarry which was near the road.

Madame Durand accepted some cakes, that she might have something to do, and Bellequeue, after assuring himself by looking in the mirror in the bar-room that his hair was not disarranged, went to keep his neighbor company. Half an hour passed, which seemed a day to Jean's mamma. At length the coachman proclaimed that they were about to start, and Madame Durand was one of the first to get into the omnibus. The nurse came; then the Englishman, who held on his knees a dozen and a half of Nanterre cakes. The little tailor reappeared, still sewing a button on the breeches which he carried over his shoulder; the wretched man smelled of wine, of beer, in a manner that would have guaranteed a whole town against the pest. The countrywoman remounted also, and nobody was missing except the young people of the back seat, and the coachman set himself to whistling to them, shouting from time to time,—

"Where the devil have they buried themselves! They are not in the inn."

"They disappeared down there," said Bellequeue, with a mischievous air.

"Certainly they are not coming back," said Madame Durand, who wished to start.

But at this moment the young couple came

running gayly and jumped laughing into the omnibus. Madame Durand noticed that the grisette had her dress torn, and that the gentleman's ears were very red.

Bellequeue, pinching his neighbor's knee softly, said to her,—

"It is very ridiculous to make us wait thus; people ought to have some manners — that's all I know about it."

The remainder of the journey was made very agreeably, except that the smell of ale had displaced the smell of snuff. When they arrived at a rather steep hill just before coming to the town, many of the travellers got down, because the horse which so easily had carried twelve persons could not manage towards the end of the journey to draw nine of them. The young man and the grisette left the coach, paying the coachman, and departed by the least frequented way. For them any neighborhood was charming, provided they were there alone. We have all experienced that. The deserts were made for lovers; however, lovers are not made for the deserts. At length Madame Durand was at Saint-Germain, breathing the same air as her son. She took Bellequeue's arm, the latter still wished to pick his way on the pavement, but at Saint-Germain it is not so good as in Paris, and Madame Durand preferred the earth. They directed their steps towards Suzon's dwelling, making many mistakes, and asking all those

whom they met for M. Jomard, a man who kept donkeys and whose wife was a nurse. At length they arrived in a kind of lonely lane which led off the road to Poissy, they read on a gate, "Jomard: Donkeys kept here." Immediately Madame Durand dropped Bellequeue's arm, and dashed into the yard where she saw four children rolling on the manure heap with the hens and ducks, and nibbling morsels of bread of which it was difficult to recognize the color. Bellequeue came in, walking on his tiptoes, which he might well do. He looked in his turn at the four children, of which the smallest, who was sixteen months old, already walked with his brothers.

"Is he amongst those?" said the coiffeur.

"Why no, they are all too old. Suzon, bring me my son, that dear little man."

"That pretty little Jean," said Bellequeue,

The nurse came from a small lower room, her dress in a disorder which was not at all in good taste.

"Why, it is monsieur and madame," cried she, retying the strings of her petticoat, which hardly came down to her calf. "Why, what a surprise! Well, you do take people unawares."

"And my son, Suzon, bring me my son."

"Wait a bit! he is in his cradle. You'll see that he is doing well."

Madame Durand followed Suzon into the lower room, in which her son's cradle was placed near

a large bed in which the whole Jomard family slept, the parents at the head, the children at the feet. Little Jean was asleep. Suzon took him and gave him to his mamma, who covered him with kisses and confessed that he was in perfect health.

"But his little cap is rather black," said the mamma.

"Oh, madame, it was quite clean this morning, but these children get dirty so quick. Well, isn't his papa coming to kiss him?"

"That is not my husband, that is his godfather, who came with me."

"I was sure that I recognized him, all the same."

Bellequeue came up and Madame Durand showed him the child.

"See how handsome he is!" said she.

Bellequeue advanced that he might kiss his godson; but the latter, who was not pleased with having been awakened, put his little hand in the well-powdered ear locks of his godfather.

"He is superb," said Bellequeue, trying to save his hair from further danger.

"I think that he resembles me," said Madame Durand, taking her way with her son to the garden, which Suzon had pointed out to her.

While Jean's mamma gave herself up to the sweetness of maternal love, the nurse led Bellequeue up to her children, and got him to admire them. She held up to him her last, who was six-

teen months old, and who placed his two little hands full of dirt, manure, and of other things on the hairdresser's cheeks, while the second boy went behind and attached himself to Bellequeue's calves. The third carried off the visitor's three-cornered hat, put it on his own head, and then he threw it into a hayloft; and the oldest one jumped on the fine gentleman's back, and amused himself with beating the drums with his queue.

The poor godfather did not know what to do. He could not get rid of the four children. He shouted,—

"My hat! my queue! my coat! why, you little rascals, you will pull my hair off. Madame Jomard, make your children have done."

But Suzon was shouting with laughter at the pleasing little attentions which her children were paying him, and Madame Durand as she came back could not refrain from laughing also as she looked at Bellequeue, who was hardly recognizable, because the ribbon of his queue being detached his hair was floating over his shoulders and falling about his face, which was besmeared with the children's hands.

"Oh, heavens, my dear Bellequeue, you look like a wild man of the wood," said Madame Durand.

The hairdresser, who preferred to look like a civilized man, sent one of the little boys under a heap of straw, and Suzon, taking a whip which

served for children and donkeys alike, made the others loosen their hold.

"You are going to dine with us, madame?" said the foster-mother. "Mercy! had I only known you were coming, but I can still give you something to eat."

"Willingly, my dear Suzon, so long as I do not have to leave my darling boy."

Bellequeue, who had begun to have enough of the Jomard family, would have preferred to dine at a restaurant in the town, and he made the proposition to Madame Durand, but she had decided to remain. Some milk, some bread and butter and her son, that was all that she desired, and the godfather was obliged to yield to her demand.

While Suzon was preparing the dinner and bemoaning the fact that her husband was absent, which would deprive him of the pleasure of seeing Jean's relations, Bellequeue managed to find a little piece of looking-glass in the house, before which, with the aid of a little comb which he always had about him, he tried to repair the havoc which the children had made in his hair. While he was washing his face Madame Durand obliged him to suck a stick of barley-sugar which had been in her son's mouth, saying to him,—

"Isn't it good? Yes, good, good, nanan — he smiled when he was sucking it, the dear love."

"Quite so," said Bellequeue, shrinking from

the barley-sugar, and having looked in vain for some powder to put on his hair, he decided to use a pinch of flour instead.

"Here's the dinner," said Suzon, "sit down, madame; you must excuse me if anything is lacking, but, mercy! this is quite without ceremony."

They seated themselves. Bellequeue could find nothing with four legs still remaining but a footstool. Beside him were the four children who had played with him in the yard. Suzon was opposite, and Madame Durand wished to hold her son in her arms while dining.

The hostess served a soup, which might have served for a vegetable stew. The children stuffed themselves, and held their plates out shouting,—

"I want some more."

"You're going to choke them," said Bellequeue.

"Oh, no, monsieur, that will make them strong. You see how well they are."

The eldest, to exhibit his prowess, forthwith pulled the footstool from under his brother, and the latter fell on Bellequeue and sent a spoonful of soup into his waistcoat. The godfather arose, saying,—

"Madame Jomard, see what your little scamps have done."

But Suzon had gone to bring a dish of pigeons, into the cooking of which she had put all her skill, and Bellequeue, having wiped his waistcoat,

reseated himself at the table and served Madame Durand, who absolutely wanted her son to suck some little onions, and later presented them to Bellequeue, saying —

"Come, eat them; your little godson has sweetened them, they taste ever so much better."

The godfather did not seem to find that they tasted so very much better, but he swallowed the onions, making a slight grimace, and doing his best to ward off his little neighbors, who often put their forks into his plate.

"Madame Jomard," said Bellequeue, "it seems to me that you should teach your children not to put their forks into other people's plates."

"Pshaw, they only do it for mischief. These children love to plague you."

"Certainly," said Madame Durand.

"As many tricks as you please; but see all that this little rascal has eaten from my plate."

Suzon served an omelette with bacon. It was the dessert. The sight of this made the children so cheerful that they shouted in concert, as they thrust out all their plates.

"Aren't they pleased?" said Suzon.

While the children were fighting to see which should be served first, one of the little boys dropped a plate on Bellequeue's knee, while the others continued to play tricks on that gentleman.

But the meal was finished at length, and Bellequeue hastened to pull out his watch, saying,—

"Don't forget that we are a long way from Paris, that it's the first time you've been out in the evening, and that it will be imprudent to stay out late. It is now five o'clock; we must start, my dear neighbor. What with getting to the omnibuses and the journey, it will be at least eight o'clock before we arrive in Paris."

"Must we leave this little jewel already? It is very cruel. Well, I shall come again. Do you hear nurse? I shall come often to see him."

"Yes, madame, and you will always find him in good health. Come, my children, kiss madame, who has given me something to buy candy."

Bellequeue felt that this was a hint to him. He pulled out his purse and offered Suzon something for the little rascals who had abused him so much. They jumped after him to kiss him, and he saw that in a moment the ribbon of his queue would again be untied, so after kissing his godson, he escaped the four little Jomards, jumped lightly into the yard, almost fell over the ducks, went and placed himself at the gate and called Madame Durand. The latter decided at last to depart but not without casting back many tender glances.

"She is a very good woman, that Suzon; these Jomards are an excellent family," said Madame Durand to her companion.

"Yes, excellent,"said Bellequeue, doubling his pace for fear Madame Durand would take a fancy to return to her son again. They arrived at the

omnibuses; Madame Durand declared that she would not get into one until she saw that it was nearly full. They soon found one in which there was only one place inside.

"Get in," said Bellequeue, "I will get up by the coachman; at least we shall start immediately."

Madame Durand got in; Bellequeue climbed to the box. This time it seemed as though they would have got over the road without an accident, but when they had almost reached the barrier the horse stumbled and Bellequeue fell on the roadway and rolled in the dust.

Happily, he came out of it with no injuries save a few bumps on the head. They got the horse up and at length reached their destination. Madame took her companion's arm; he was limping a little.

"Confess, my dear Bellequeue," said she, "that we have passed an agreeable day."

"Yes, excessively agreeable," answered the worthy hairdresser, supporting himself on his cane.

"We will go again, neighbor; we will go often to see that good Suzon."

Bellequeue made no answer, he contented himself with wishing Madame Durand, who had arrived at her door, good-night.

CHAPTER IV

Jean's Childhood

Let us, like Bellequeue, who did not care to pass another "charming day" with the Jomard family, refrain from accompanying Madame Durand in her visits to the foster-mother's. Nor will we too closely follow the infant's development and give an account of each step,of the cutting of each little tooth.

At eighteen months of age little Jean could walk alone, and though as a matter of course his vocabulary was as yet rather limited he was able to pronounce quite plainly and vigorously some big oaths which Father Jomard had taught him. He could fight well enough to hold his own with his foster brothers; and did not hesitate to hurl his crust or his slice of bread and jam in the face of any one who looked at him too closely or to whose appearance he took exception.

As he appeared strong and healthy his parents thought that he had nothing more to gain and that he was learning more than he ought at his nurse's house, and they brought him back to the paternal roof.

M. Durand, who had not seen his son since the

day of his birth, found him excessively grown; he took him on his knee and the child kicked so as not to stay there. He put in baby's mouth a little bit of gum arabic, and M. Jean slapped him in the face; the herbalist then placed his son on the ground, declaring that he was as strong as a Turk, but that he must try and make him more tractable in his disposition. Madame Durand said that would come of itself; besides, there was no harm in a man having some will, and that his son had already evinced most amiable qualities, although he did not know how to say anything except "Confound it!" and "By Jove."

The whole family came to see little Jean and admire his pretty face; in fact, when M. Jean would refrain from making a grimace or putting out his tongue at those who were looking at him he was not at all ugly. Madame Ledoux affirmed that he was something like her fifth, of whom the bailiff had been the father. M. Renard thought that he had a fine nose; Madame Grosbleu kissed him, shedding tears of tenderness, Mademoiselle Aglae kissed him laughing; M. Mistigris felt his calf, swore that he would make something out of him and that Alcibiades had not a more beautiful instep. Finally, Madame Moka, who had also come running to admire him, was delighted and astonished, and exclaimed,—

"I could not have believed that he would have matured so quickly."

"Hang it," said Catherine, "a child who came into the world in the presence of a platoon of grenadiers, who all drank to his health — why shouldn't he get on well?"

Bellequeue, who often came to see his godson, since he was no longer at his foster mother's, said also as he caressed or played with him,—

"Yes, he will be a fine fellow, like his godfather."

His infancy passed well enough; they excused the stampings, the thumps which the child distributed, because he was still too small for any one to get angry with him. They laughed when he swore; Bellequeue thought it charming when his godson called him "an ugly rascal," and Madame Durand laughed like a madwoman when Jean slapped his father. They showed the amiable child as a prodigy to everybody who came into the shop, and M. Jean put his fingers into the eyes of those who wanted to kiss him or scratched the faces of those who held out their arms to him, and everybody went away saying to himself,—

"A very pleasing child, indeed."

Jean thus reached his sixth year, knowing only how to play, to swear, to eat, and to sleep; in truth, he had not lost much time yet about any of those things, and in the midst of his frolicsomeness it was easy to see that little Jean had not a bad heart. He had once given all his breakfast to a poor man, and another time he had cried all

day long because in playing with a knife he had cut one of his little friend's fingers. Jean had not a malicious heart; by his repartees and the tricks which he played he showed that he had some wit; they might have made something of him, but it would have been necessary first to dominate his will, and not to establish by commendation or indulgence faults which deserved only reprimands or correction.

When his son was six years old M. Durand declared that he wished to begin his education; that is to say, to teach him to understand simples, to botanize and to distinguish all the grains which were in the shop. Little Jean would much rather have learned swordplay with his godfather Bellequeue than to study botany; and Madame Durand thought that before learning the nature of herbs it was necessary at least that he should know his letters. But M. Durand was inflexible in this respect; he made his son sit beside him at the counter and began to give him some lessons. Little Jean wept or stamped his feet over the camomile and the poppies; his papa gave him some slight correction and, showing him some dockroot, tried several times to make him repeat with him the name of this plant. M. Jean threw the dock in his father's face, who then resolved to administer a scholastic flagellation to his offspring, and said gravely to him,—

"Monsieur, take off your breeches."

The child, believing in all good faith that this only meant changing his clothes, took off his little breeches, and came gayly back, linen in the wind, dancing up to his father; but M. Durand, seizing him in his arms, coldly gave him half a dozen slaps, saying to him,—

"This is to teach you to know dock, 'lapathum'; this is that you may say with me the name of camomile, 'anthemis'; this is for purslane, 'portulacca'; you will have a slap for each, in this manner, my young friend, you will learn botany 'Perfas et nefas.'"

Little Jean, who was obliged to take a course of botany 'nefas,' screamed loudly, his mother came running and almost fell down, she felt so ill at seeing how M. Durand was conducting the boy's studies. She snatched the child from him and called him a barbarian and a tyrant. Happily, Bellequeue arrived and lent his best efforts to reestablish the peace which his godson so often troubled. He heard both parties and said that each one was right, which is the best way of arranging such a matter; and as Jean would not yet take to botany he proposed to the parents to send him to school in the morning, in order that he might first learn something else.

They yielded to M. Bellequeue's opinion, and it was decided that Jean should go to school from the morning up to five o'clock in the evening. Madame Durand chose that temple of learning

which was nearest her dwelling, and after recommending her son to the master, as formerly she had recommended him to Suzon Jomard, the next morning she led little Jean to school, the child carrying a basket of provisions in his hand and having a big slate hung at his side.

At first Jean was pleased with his school; he was delighted to find there a group of little boys of his own age and to be able to give himself up to playing new games. In the beginning the work did not weary him, he learned with extreme facility, and in a quarter of an hour would know what it took others a half a day to study; but presently his liveliness, his heedlessness, his habit of doing only according to his own will made him neglect his grammar to occupy himself with jokes which he played on his comrades. Every day Jean invented some new trick which put the class in disorder; he hid the book of one, upset the inkstand of the other, changed the baskets, tore the copybooks, broke the rules, and at length went so far as to pull out the tongue of the master's bell. As Madame Durand often made presents to the schoolmaster, the latter was very indulgent to Jean, and contented himself with saying to the mother,—

"He is very heedless, but that will correct itself; he has much talent, though to tell you the truth he does not make good use of it — but all the same he has an infinite amount of talent."

Madame Durand kissed her son, slipped a pot of jam or a cake into his hand and went back home, saying,—

"The master says that our son is full of talent."

"His handwriting looks like the scratching of a cat, and he hath not learned to read correctly," said M. Durand.

"All the same, monsieur, the fact that he has talent is sufficient."

In the evening Jean often came home with his breeches torn, with no cap, and with two or three scratches on his face. Then M. Durand would say to him,—

"What put your face in that state, monsieur?"

"It was in playing, papa."

"And who tore your pantaloons?"

"It was in playing."

"And your cap, have you lost it?"

"It was in playing."

"My dear, since it was in playing," said Madame Durand, "you must not scold him. You can't wish that my son should not play, and that he should kill himself over his books and examples. Play, my son, and enjoy this happy age; it will pass quickly enough."

Jean kissed his mother and ran home with his godfather, who taught him to do une deux, to parry quart, to parry tierce, and to guard himself skilfully. Then afterwards he willingly played ball or ninepins with his godson, to whom he said

that a man always knows enough when he can use his sword well, and that he can present himself anywhere if his hair is well dressed and he holds himself straight.

Jean thought that was charming and preferred Bellequeue's society to that of his father, who kept returning to his herbs, and never approached his son except with a packet of roots in his hand.

Jean was not the only heedless fellow in his class. There was a boy of the school, named Demar, who was impudent, a liar and a thief, and a certain Gervais who was extremely idle, greedy and cowardly. These gentlemen soon became very intimate with Jean, who despite his heedlessness was always frank and loyal, preferring to be beaten rather than to put his faults on to somebody else's back, and never hesitated to say, "I did it," for fear they would accuse his comrades of it.

It was not thus with Demar, who was a year older than Jean. Brought up very strictly by his parents, this child had contracted the habit of lying, and tried to make his comrades suffer the punishment which he had deserved. When Jean reproached him for his falsehood, Demar, who was crafty, answered him by some joke or taught him a new game. Jean bore no grudges and made up with his friends.

Gervais, who was very greedy, would go to Jean's basket and take part of his lunch. Jean

was angry at first, but Gervais would allow himself to be beaten without returning a blow, so to a generous-minded boy it was necessary to forgive him, and the latter, knowing Jean's courage, always implored his protection when he had quarrels with his comrades.

These gentlemen agreed very well on one point, which was that they did not like to work or to do anything except their own will. They left school together, and instead of returning immediately home to their parents they went to play at pitch-farthing or tipcat. Jean invented tricks to make game of the passers-by, he would run and throw himself in the flat basket of a hawker, he would fill his hands with glue, and go and pull a gentleman by his coat. In winter he would tie a string to the knocker of a door and hide in a passageway opposite, knocking and pulling the string, then laughing with his comrades at the expense of the porter who opened the door, looked on all sides and saw nobody. Demar's tricks were of another kind. He sometimes stole plums and nuts at the grocer's, then he would hide himself and eat them. As for Gervais, he contented himself with borrowing sous from Jean and never returning them.

Jean grew and did not become more docile. He knew how to read and write passably well, but that was all; he would not study Latin, or history, or geography. His godfather often went to look

for him on the Place Royal, where he was amusing himself at playing pitch-and-toss instead of going home.

Bellequeue began to feel his years, and sometimes he placed his heel on the ground, but he was not less of a dandy nor less careful in dressing his hair; for the past year, since his circumstances were sufficiently easy, he had left his shop and dressed the hair of a few acquaintances only, for friendship's sake. As he grew older he became every day more attached to his godson. Jean promised to be tall, he had intelligent eyes, beautiful brown hair, a well-shaped forehead, a frank face, although he never sought to make himself pleasant; and Bellequeue, while passing his hands through his godson's hair, would say to him,—

"Yes, yes, you will be a fine fellow, a handsome boy. Oh, if your mother would let your hair grow at the back and you could have had a queue like me; but she asserts that it is no longer the fashion. I shall never forgive the Revolution for having destroyed queues, hammers, the chancellor's beautiful curls, the ninons for women." Jean would answer to this,—

"Isn't it true, godfather, that in order to become a man like you I have no need to know Latin and Greek, to say musa, the muse, rosa, the rose, and to know that there are volcanoes in Italy and Ireland?"

"Certainly," answered Bellequeue, "I never

occupied myself definitely with all that, and I don't believe that I know my trade any the worse for that. Of course, I know very well that you are not going to be a hairdresser; for you will have some fortune, and they would like you to become a learned man — hold yourself straight, my boy. If you are to be a doctor or a lawyer, a little geography will be necessary to you, I believe."

"But godfather, I don't want to be anything."

"Then, my boy, I think that you know enough about it, provided that you can put yourself on guard, that you know two or three secret thrusts, in order that you may be able to defend the fair sex when occasion presents itself; that is all that is necessary. Manners, of course, before everything; but then gallantry and politeness to the ladies and the rest will all come in good time."

Madame Durand thought nearly the same as Bellequeue. Her son bade fair to be a handsome fellow and well made, what more was necessary? The herbalist was by no means of this opinion; he saw Jean as he was, unwilling to learn, disobedient, and acquiring very bad manners.

M. Durand still wished to teach his son the nature of simples, but when Jean had passed half an hour in the shop it was unrecognizable; the herbs were mixed; the flowers put in place of the roots, the labels torn, it would have taken a week to repair the disorder which his pupil had brought about. The papa tried another way, he led his

son for a walk into the country to botanize there with him; but in place of looking after plants, M. Jean climbed trees and ran after the butterflies, and M. Durand, having one day essayed to recommence the lesson 'per nefas' his son escaped across the fields and returned to the house.

"Of a surety," said M. Durand, "I shall never make anything of this boy unless I resort to severe measures. There is nothing to hope for him."

"You don't love your son," answered Madame Durand, "you never find anything but faults in him. Charming fellow! He has large almond-shaped eyes, beautiful teeth, he will be very tall, I wager that he will be at least five feet, six inches. You should be proud to have a son like that."

Bellequeue would say then, extending his leg or re-adjusting a curl of his hair,—

"I believe that the boy will do. I know very well that he is not ardently fond of study, but he does very well with the sword, his eye is sure, he holds himself like an Apollo, you'll see he'll be a fine fellow yet."

CHAPTER V

A Ball at the Dancing Master's. Jean's Youth

Jean was thirteen years old when they thought it advisable to take him from the preparatory school, where for some time past he had been neglecting his grammar and other tasks; however, he read passably well and his writing was almost decipherable.

Madame Durand declared that her son had finished his studies, that he knew sufficient for all practical purposes, and that nothing further was needed to complete his education but that he should acquire some genteel little accomplishments by means of which he could make himself welcome in society.

M. Durand, whose ideas were far more practical and sensible than those of his spouse, and who loved his occupation, thought that nothing could be more genteel or useful than for a man to know just how much linseed meal or bran it was necessary to put into a poultice, but Jean had declared that he would never be a herbalist, and it was therefore necessary that the papa should renounce the hope of handing down the business to his son.

At this time Madame Durand had attained her forty-eighth year, and all her hopes were set on her son, who had improved immensely and grown very attractive. A mother, as she herself gives up the hope of pleasing, becomes vain of her children; she is proud of their beauty and often has illusions in respect to their talent. One could hardly have any illusions in regard to those of Jean, who was expert only in the games of pitch-and-toss and cup and ball. But while Jean was playing the deuce he often sang, and they discovered that he had a voice of some compass and of very pleasing quality. Naturally Madame Durand was the first to notice this, and she began to say to all her acquaintances,—

"My son might be a star at the opera if I were willing to let him go on the stage. Have you heard him sing? He has an extraordinarily fine voice, he was humming this morning, 'le bon Roi Dagobert a mis sa culotte a l'envers,' and I could have imagined I was at the Bouffes."

So it was decided that Jean should learn music; and as it was also time that he should know how to hold his own at a ball and perform 'la Poule' and the English chain gracefully, they informed M. Mistigris that he might do his best to make a zephyr of Jean.

M. Mistigris was beginning to get gray, being then over fifty-three years of age, but he asserted that age rendered him more lively on his feet and

that each year he cut higher capers than the year before, according to which if only M. Mistigris should attain the age of an octogenarian he would end by jumping as high as the house. For a long time past M. Mistigris had begged that he might undertake to teach his little cousin dancing, and he quickly responded to their summons, bringing his kit under his arm. He admired Jean's legs, and asked that youth to show his instep, which the latter did by thrusting it into M. Mistigris' face. The professor then told his pupil to make a bow, which Jean did in so exaggerated a fashion that he fell on the floor; upon which M. Mistigris vowed the young man had a great deal of talent and would soon dance as well as himself.

The violin-master said the same, because he wished to get the money for his lessons, and he gave a hundred-sous piece to little Jean for the inclination towards music which he had never shown.

Jean ran to spend his hundred sous with his friends Demar and Gervais. On leaving school he had not lost sight of his two comrades, who lived in his neighborhood, and whenever he could escape from his parents' house he would go to rejoin these gentlemen, who had a customary place of meeting with several other little rascals of their own age.

Jean was always welcome among them because he always had money in his pocket, his mother

and his godfather wishing that he should have the means of buying what pleased him; but Jean was not greedy, and his money soon passed from his hands into those of his friends, who swore eternal friendship. At fourteen years of age one believes in such vows. There are some people who continue to believe them even after they have attained manhood, which is highly creditable to them, for people who act in good faith never suspect that others will do otherwise. Demar never had any money, because his parents were greatly displeased with him and treated him with severity, wishing to deprive him of the means of committing foolish actions; Gervais was born of poor people and could very rarely obtain a gift — you may judge with what joy they welcomed Jean among them, for he was the wealthy member of their society. Demar sometimes said to his friend,—

"You are very fortunate! You can have all that you wish, for with money one may amuse himself, dine well, or ride in a carriage; if we were all three rich we would travel together. How we should enjoy ourselves!"

"Sure enough, if we were rich we could do anything we liked from morning till night," said Gervais. "We would never work, we could go wherever we wanted, and in the evening no one would make us do penance on bread and water."

"They want me to learn music and dancing now," said Jean, "the stupidest things in the

world. What do they think I want with masters, tiresome things that they are? I am going to make such jolly game of them that they won't come again; besides, my godfather says that I am a good swordsman and that I hold myself straight, and isn't that enough?"

"Tell you what, Jean," replied Demar, who seemed to be meditating on some plan, "if I were in your place, I should ask my godfather for some money. He loves you and he will not refuse you, and with what he gives you we'll all three of us go and amuse ourselves in the outskirts of Paris. We shall find much better places there to play pitch-and-toss and ball."

"We could fly paper kites, and while we were doing that we wouldn't let music-masters and dancing-masters bother us," added Gervais.

Jean did not answer, he would have liked very much to go and idle with his friends in the country, but he had not yet got to the point of thinking that he could absent himself for any length of time from the parental shelter. With all his heedlessness Jean loved his parents, above all his mother, who gave him every day proofs of her affection. He very quickly, therefore, forgot Demar's proposition.

But the music-master, intent on earning his money, was prompt in going to give his lesson, although his pupil did not show himself at all docile, and would not sing the scale. He whistled

when his master gave him the "la," he beat the retreat on his thighs while his master was singing the scale, and when the violin was placed in his hands he allowed it to fall on the floor. These pleasing little tricks at length tired the master's patience, and after four months' lessons, during which Jean would not even learn to play the tune of "Bossus," the professor declared to Monsieur and Madame Durand that their son would do nothing, and that he would never learn music.

"Of that I was assured from the outset," said the herbalist, "a boy who hath not capacity to learn how to make a bath of emollient herbs of a verity hath none to learn music; 'emollit mores'—"

"This master doesn't know what he is talking about," cried Madame Durand. "He doesn't know how to take Jean; he is a miserable professor. We must get another; but so far as that goes, you know very well he has no need of learning music in order to sing."

M. Mistigris was hardly more fortunate with Jean, who amused himself at his cousin's expense. When it was necessary that he should take a step, he begged M. Mistigris to execute it several times before him, assuring him that he could learn much better so. The old dancing-master did as he was entreated, he jumped, turned, twisted his legs and cut capers before his pupil, who, seated quietly in an easy chair, amused himself by watching

M. Mistigris put himself into a perspiration. Jean applauded him from time to time, cried "Bravo" when his master jumped very high, and the lesson nearly always passed thus — Jean looking on, and Mistigris jumping in a fashion that would have led one to believe that it was the latter who was receiving lessons from Jean. This manner of teaching did not render the pupil's legs nimble, and M. Mistigris danced for several months before Jean without the latter learning the first position.

The worthy professor tried to think of another means of giving his pupil the desire to become a good dancer and hoped he had hit upon something that would prove both pleasurable and profitable to the graceless Jean.

M. Mistigris, following the custom of several of his colleagues in the terpsichorean art assembled his pupils at his house once a week, and although he lodged on the third floor of a house at the Rue des Gravilliers, he imagined it possible for him to give some bals champêtres similar to those of la Chaumière and Vauxhall. He therefore said one day to Madame Durand,—

"As your son has not yet acquired a perfect knowledge of the figures, I believe it will be necessary for him to come sometimes to my little ball. He will meet there my pupils of both sexes who dance well; that will give him a taste for pretty poses and a love for time, without which a young man doesn't know on which foot he is to dance."

"You are perfectly right," said Madame Durand, "my son shall go to your ball."

"It's the day after tomorrow. Be friendly enough to bring him there; you will see a charming party — some fine fellows who jump as high as the ceiling and some young ladies who lift their legs as high as my shoulders."

"It will give me much pleasure to do so."

"You know the number; besides, you will hear the music from below."

"At what time does it commence?"

"Oh, early, as soon as there are enough guests I form a quadrille. I count on you; bring some friends if you wish to do so."

Madame Durand informed her son that she should take him to the ball. As Jean had never been to a ball, he was not sure whether he should like it. M. Durand would not leave his shop to go and see people dance, and they therefore proposed to M. Bellequeue to be of the party. He accepted with great pleasure, because he was a connoisseur of the terpsichorean art.

The day of the party having arrived. Madame Durand made her son dress in his best, although he would have greatly preferred to his fashionable coat and his pretty hat the morning jacket in which he got into all kinds of mischief with his intimate friends. But this time there was no way of escape, Madame Durand did not leave her son nor let him out of her sight. She patted him on

the cheek, calling him a naughty boy, but with an expression which meant "You are a dear, nice fellow."

Bellequeue did not keep them waiting; his toilet was careful, and his hair exhaled from afar an odor of vanilla and jasmine; he had put on more powder than usual, in order that he might better hide the white hairs which were beginning to come. He held in one hand his three-cornered hat and in the other a brand new pair of canary-colored gloves, and appeared to have all the vigor of youth when he presented his arm to Madame Durand.

They started, and in due time arrived in the Rue des Gravilliers. It was seven o'clock in the evening and it was still light, but Madame Durand had forgotten the number of the house. Fortunately, they heard the sound of an instrument, and on looking up perceived M. Mistigris at a window of the third floor playing, not on his kit, but on a violin. He was leaning far out of the window and shouting the figures into the street as if he wanted to make the passers-by dance.

"Oh, here it is," said Madame Durand, "I recognize the place."

"The devil," said Bellequeue, "it seems that the ball is already in progress; but where is the door? It must be in this alley. Let us go in."

They went into a narrow alley, profoundly dark, at the end of which they gropingly sought to find the staircase.

"Where are we trying to get to through this breakneck alley?" said Jean.

"To the ball, my son."

"Certainly," said Bellequeue, "they should hang out a lamp or a lantern on the days on which they have dances. But perhaps there is a porter here. Let's call. Holloa, porter. Porter, where is the staircase which leads to the ball?"

Receiving no response, Bellequeue called again, and at length a trembling voice, which seemed to come from the first floor, said,—

"What do you want?"

"We want M. Mistigris' ball."

"Go up to the third floor."

"We can't find the staircase."

"Go to the right, in the recess."

"Infinitely obliged."

M. Bellequeue, who acted as a scout, presently uttered a joyful shout.

"Victory, I have hold of the banister. Come and take my hand, and I will guide you."

They followed Bellequeue. On reaching the first story they began to be able to see before them; on the second they could almost see the steps; on the third it was light, and they read on the door, "Mistigris, teacher of French and foreign dancing. Pumps furnished. Ring loud, if you please."

Bellequeue put on his gloves, readjusted his cravat, and rang, while Madame Durand arranged

her collarette and rubbed her son's coat, which he had whitened on the staircase. A maid-servant of fifty years of age opened the door and led the company into an anteroom, from whence they could hear Mistigris' violin in the distance. The servant took the gentlemen's hats and gave them in exchange some cards with numbers on them.

"Why do they give those?" said Jean.

"So that one may easily find his hat again," said Bellequeue.

"Oh, it seems that they do everything in grand style."

"Do you wish for some pumps, gentlemen?" said the maid.

"I am not thirsty yet," said Jean.

"I did not mean that, my child. These pumps are shoes for the convenience of the dancers who have come in boots. But your shoes will do very well, gentlemen; besides, for the first time the company will be indulgent."

Bellequeue presented his arm to Madame Durand, saying to the maid,—

"Where is the ballroom?"

The maid walked before them down a long passage, at the end of which they found themselves in an immense room, furnished only with benches. The only person there was M. Mistigris, who was playing the violin like mad and shouting the figures as he leaned far out of the window.

Bellequeue and Madame Durand looked in all

the corners and sought for another door, hoping to discover the dancers. M. Mistigris, perceiving them, left his window and came to receive them, continuing to play upon the violin, however,—

"Ah, here you are, it is very nice of you to remember that this is the evening of my ball. M. Bellequeue, I am delighted to see you. Ah, here is my pupil; look at him! lazy fellow, he's lounging on the benches already. Presently he is going to give us 'la Poule.'"

Having said this, M. Mistigris returned to his window, shouting louder than ever.

"But where are the dancers, cousin?"

"Oh, they haven't arrived yet. But they'll come; oh, they're sure to, it's not late."

"But why shout the figures and play your violin when you are all alone?"

"Oh, it's habit; then it looks well. It appeals to the passers-by and gives them a desire to come up and learn to dance. Don't you play an instrument, M. Bellequeue? I have a hunting-horn here."

"No, I don't know how to play it."

"That's a pity, you could stand beside me at the window here. But we can commence, nothing prevents our forming a quadrille, Madame Durand and her son, and myself and my maid. Oh, she dances very well, she can do the figures better than she can make a stew. She is accus-

tomed to making herself very useful. Holloa, Nanette, come here, we lack a fourth. You'll see how well she does it."

But Madame Durand absolutely declined to dance, and Bellequeue did not care to soil his canary-colored gloves with the maid. At this moment the bell rang. Mistigris' face expanded, and he shouted to Nanette,—

"Here's somebody, go and open the door for them."

"I thought I was wanted to dance, monsieur," said the maid, who had already lifted the corner of her apron as a preparation for taking part in the set.

"Go and open the door, Nanette; you shall dance if we need you."

Nanette, who was extremely fond of dancing, went to open the door, and presently a young man came in. He wore nankeen trousers and blue stockings and put his feet into position before bowing, which he did low to each member of the company.

"Very good, very well done, M. Charlot," said Mistigris, who had not left the window. "A little more stocking; that's it, that's it, that's it. Hold your head well up on your shoulders. Give us a little scene from 'Annette and Lubin' before we begin the ball."

Charlot, who was a big clumsy fellow, took off his coat and put his red handkerchief under his

belt, as though he were preparing himself to come on the stage, while M. Mistigris said aside to Madame Durand,—

"He is a young man who is destined for the pantomime, and I am giving him lessons, because the pantomime is the natural daughter of the dance. Now, my maid, seat yourself there, you will represent the shepherdess."

The maid-of-all-work placed herself on the bench, and the young man glissaded about the room and, dropping on one knee at some steps from the shepherdess, he began a declaration to her in pantomime; but here Jean, who believed that Charlot had taken off his coat to play at leap-frog, took off his also and darted lightly over Charlot's head, in such a manner as to fall between him and Nanette.

"Bravo," said Mistigris, "I could not have done better at fifteen years of age."

At this moment the bell rang, and the shepherdess was obliged to go and open the door; so Mistigris said to the young man, who still remained in his loverlike position,—

"My dear fellow, I have a good many people coming tonight, and as the ball is about to begin the pantomime will have to remain over for another time."

Madame Durand put on her son's coat again and begged him to behave decently. At this moment four persons entered the room, a mamma,

followed by her three daughters. Mistigris left the window, exclaiming,—

"All the Mouton family! Oh, this is charming, we shall be in great force!"

Madame Mouton was a big, fat woman, fifty years old, pimpled like a vine-dresser and having her upper lip surmounted by a little brown mustache which would have done honor to a conscript. She was arrayed in a gauze bonnet ornamented with roses, while her three daughters had simply hoods which almost hid their faces. Madame Mouton never failed to be present at her young ladies' dancing lessons, in which she also took part. She was one of the most indefatigable dancers at M. Mistigris' ball.

While the Mouton family curtseyed, to which the big Charlot responded by bowing to the ground, Bellequeue put on his gloves as he remarked, "This is commencing to be lively!" The maid muttered, ill-humoredly, "Come, here's all the Mouton family. They won't have any need of a fourth."

Mistigris went and got a drum, which he placed on the window-sill beside him, and signed to Jean to come and beat it to accompany the violin. Jean did not confine himself to beating in time, but sought how he could make the most noise; but this was all that Mistigris wished, and he exclaimed, as he looked out of the window,—

"Good, they can hear us in the street! Two

persons have stopped. Stick to it, Jean. Ladies' chain!"

The bell rang again. This time it was three young lawyers' clerks, who came in to have a jolly time at M. Mistigris's ball and to try to make some acquaintances there; then came a little girl of seven years, with her papa; then two young damsels or dames, who appeared to be accustomed to go everywhere, and who helped themselves to seats in the ballroom as if they were placing themselves in the parterre at M. Saqui's.

"There will be a great number of people," said Madame Durand to Bellequeue, "I knew that my cousin was very popular."

Bellequeue assented indifferently, and then went to look in the mirror to see that his hair was not disarranged. Mistigris was in a fever of delight at having so many people, and his maid came and whispered to him,—

"Monsieur, there are enough to make two quadrilles if you take me for the fourth."

Two of the clerks invited the young girls who came without papa and mamma, the third took one of the Mouton young ladies, and Charlot placed himself with the little girl of seven years; but a gentleman was lacking for the opposite couple, and there remained only the little girl's papa, who had the gout, and Jean, who declared that he would not dance; then Madame Mouton arose. "I am going to be a gentleman," said she, and placed her-

self with one of her daughters opposite Charlot, while Nanette muttered in a corner of the room,—

"When that Madame Mouton's here there is no need of my making either a lady or a gentleman."

The signal was given, the dancers started; Madame Mouton, saying, "Do not forget that I am a man," launched herself with so much force that she knocked down the little girl opposite her; but the latter picked herself up laughing, and the figure continued. Later Bellequeue took part; he danced as in the time when they wore powder, and Mistigris shouted to him,—

"Don't take so many steps, M. Bellequeue, it is no longer the fashion."

"That is all the same to me, M. Mistigris," said Bellequeue, "I like to do them, and it is always pretty."

At the second figure Jean split the drum; Mistigris paused, overwhelmed by the accident.

"Keep on with the violin," said Madame Mouton, "we don't need a drum to mark the time."

In fact, the good mamma marked it herself at every step in such a manner as to make the benches leap; but M. Mistigris, who was delighted at having an orchestra, went in search of a flageolet, which he gave to Jean, saying to him,—

"Can you breathe a little on that?"

"If it is only necessary to breathe," said Jean, "you shall see how well I can do it."

They resumed the contra-dance to the sound of the violin and Jean's flageolet; he blew it in such a manner as to make himself heard at both ends of the street. While calling the figures, Mistigris also gave some advice to his pupils, shouting to one, "Round your arms," and to the other, "Let yourself go in balancing — a caper here. Smile at your lady! Why don't you smile?"

Madame Mouton and Bellequeue profited by the master's lesson, one of them wore a fixed smile of the widest proportions, and the other danced with so much abandon that the perspiration rolled down his forehead, with powder and pomatum. Finally, the quadrille ended. It was time, for Bellequeue and Madame Mouton were trying to see who could make the most dust. After the contra-dance, Jean threw aside the flageolet and made a wheel and a culvert in the middle of the room.

"Is he a child?" said Madame Mouton, "he plays as if he was six years old."

"A proof of innocence and candor," said Bellequeue.

"That is true," said Madame Mouton, "I used also to make culverts very well; I don't know if I remember how to do it now."

As no one wished to see Madame Mouton make a culvert, they contented themselves with applauding Jean, and exclaiming, "It is very warm here, if one could only refresh one's self!"

As the only refreshment, however, the maid, who no doubt received some perquisite from the pumps, came after the quadrille and wished to know if anyone cared to change his shoes in order to ease his feet for the dance; and M. Mistigris watered the ballroom with a funnel, saying,—

"There's nothing more refreshing than that."

They formed a new contra-dance, and this time Madame Mouton danced as a lady with Nanette, who enacted the gentleman, because Jean did not wish to play the flageolet any longer and Charlot replaced him in the orchestra. Madame Mouton requested "the little milkmaid," of which she liked the figures very much.

They danced several quadrilles, in which Madame Mouton showed herself indefatigable. Jean, who was not at all amused by watching them dance, extended himself on a bench and went to sleep soundly.

"Send me your son every week," said Mistigris to Madame Durand. "You'll see how much he will acquire in being present at my ball every week; besides, it forms a young man, it'll give him the habit of meeting people, and those of good society. I often have more people than this. It sometimes happens that I have twenty people at a time, but then they pay ten centimes for each quadrille. Those are Nanette's perquisites."

The hour arrived for the party to break up. Madame Mouton wished that they should dance

an English quadrille, but two of the clerks had already left with two of the young ladies, who had very willingly accepted their escort; and Madame Durand went to awaken her son that they might get on their way. The guests exchanged their tickets for their hats, and Nanette lighted them down, in order that they might not lose themselves in the alley; they bowed themselves to the door, and at a quarter past ten the dancing-master's ball ended. Bellequeue was delighted with the evening, although it promised to make his joints stiff the next day; and Madame Durand said to her son,—

"My dear, were you very much entertained at the ball?"

"Not at all," answered Jean.

"Why, did you have no desire to dance?"

"It only made me want to go to sleep."

"That was because you did not dance yourself. But as I wish you to become a fine dancer like your godfather Bellequeue, you will go every week to M. Mistigris' ball."

Jean answered nothing, and his mother said in a low tone to Bellequeue,—

"You see how docile he is. His father doesn't know how to take him, but with kindness I can make him do all that I wish. As for that, you have seen how charming he has been this evening."

"As far as that goes, he has conducted himself like a little man of fifteen," said Bellequeue.

The next day Jean, in the company of his cronies, indemnified himself for the evening passed at the dancing-master's.

"They want me to go there again," said he to them, "but I'll deprive them of all desire to go to these balls. With their legs sticking out, and their arms rounded, and their swingings, they look like idiots! As to my godfather, he jumps like a goat. It made me feel sorry for him. Do you think a man need make such a fool of himself?"

"Certainly not," said Demar. "It is much better to play tipcat or climb a greased pole."

The day of the next ball arrived. Madame Durand, who did not care to go out often, counted upon M. Bellequeue's taking her son, but Bellequeue still felt the effects of the capers he had cut at M. Mistigris' and he could not get over it. Jean was over fourteen years old, and might very well have gone alone, but they were afraid that he would not go to the dancing-master's house, Catherine was needed at home, it therefore fell out that M. Durand decided to take his son. Jean did not at all care to have his father's company, and he repeatedly said,—

"I can go very well all alone."

But M. Durand had taken his hat and stick, saying,—

"In truth, my son, your discretion is not such as to allow us to trust to your promises as yet;

'Experto credo, Roberto,' which is to say, I am going with you."

They walked in silence towards M. Mistigris' dwelling. Papa Durand liked to talk only of his occupation, Jean understood nothing about it, and for this reason the father and son said not a word. This time Mistigris had placed the end of a candle in the dark passageway, which announced an extraordinary party, and that made Jean smile. They met the Mouton family on the stairs, the mamma stopping at each step to ask her daughters if her bonnet was on straight, because the sight of the candle-end had warned her that there would be a brilliant gathering. There were three ladies and two gentlemen more in the dancing-room than there had been on the previous occasion, and M. Mistigris had hired a little Savoyard, who was seated on the window-sill beating a drum, even when they were not dancing. M. Durand went up to M. Mistigris and extended his hand, saying,—

"'Salutem tibi,'" and Mistigris held a leg out to him, as he answered,—

"It is very well, I thank you."

The ladies seated themselves on the benches while the gentlemen walked about the room. M. Mistigris tuned his violin, and said to the little Savoyard, "Give me the la." "I haven't got it, monsieur, you have given me nothing," answered the little Savoyard, ingenuously.

Mademoiselle Nanette came and went between the antechamber and the hall, taking off her apron every time she came into the dancing hall and putting it on again to go and open the door. Jean refused the flageolet when M. Mistigris offered it to him. He walked about the hall and seemed to be waiting impatiently until they had taken their places. They danced a quadrille of sixteen, including Nanette, who was delighted to figure in the dance. While Mistigris played the prelude of the "Pantalon" Jean drew from his pocket a fistful of little balls, which he threw into the middle of the ballroom.

"Begin," cried Mistigris, and the dancers put themselves in motion. But detonations were heard on all sides, they recoiled and advanced in their fright, and in recoiling and advancing they stepped again on the fulminating peas which M. Jean had thrown by handfuls into the hall. The damsels Mouton uttered cries of fright, and their mamma received a shock every time she made one of the noisy things explode. The little girls wept, the ladies called "Help!" big Charlot thought the house was falling down, and the young clerks shouted with laughter. M. Mistigris sought to re-establish order.

"This is the malice of some competitor; some one who is jealous of my ball has perpetrated this unpleasant joke."

M. Durand, who while endeavoring to help

Madame Mouton had caused several of the fulminating peas to explode, sought on all sides for his son, and shouted,—

"Come here to me, Jean; I am going to feel in your pockets."

Jean was no longer there, he had disappeared at the moment that the contra-dance commenced. Nanette went down the passage, shouting to him,—

"M. Jean, your papa is asking for you," but Jean did not answer.

The maid, keeping right on, perceived that there was no longer a light in the room which served as a vestibule.

"Who can have blown out the light," said Nanette, beginning to grope, "It is very ridiculous—"

Nanette did not finish, something clasped her round the legs, she fell, uttering a loud shriek. The maid's cry was heard in the ballroom.

"Something is taking place in the vestibule," said M. Mistigris. "Can robbers have entered the house; it would be strange if they should have chosen to come on a day when I had so many people here."

But ere this all the young men had dashed into the passage to learn what was going on in the antechamber. M. Mistigris, followed them, his bow in hand; several ladies followed him, their curiosity prevailing over fear; but no one took a light because they did not know that there was no longer one in the antechamber. Arrived there,

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M. Durand . . . arrived on the scene.

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS.

hardly any of them had taken two steps in the darkness before they turned somersaults like Nanette. The number of people augmented the disorder; some cried, the others laughed. In the midst of the confusion, M. Mistigris shouted loudly for a light, and M. Durand, who had not followed the curious, arrived on the scene holding in one hand a torch and in the other a stick. As soon as the scene was lighted they saw what had occasioned the fall of so many people — two thick cords had been attached from end to end of the room, about ten inches from the ground.

"This is horrible!" cried the master of the dance, who in falling had sprained his foot. "It is an abominable trick! To cause me to make a false step with all of my pupils! The explosives could be excused, but this is a crowning offence."

A burst of laughter was the only response which M. Mistigris received, and they then perceived the face of Jean, who from the landing, where he held the door half open, had amused himself by looking at all those whom his expedient had caused to turn somersaults.

"You are the culprit," said Mistigris, pointing at Jean.

"Of a surety it is he," said M. Durand, "but I myself shall avenge the worthy persons whom my son has precipitated to the ground. 'Tu castigaberis,' you rascal, you! Gentlemen and ladies, I shall send you some vulnerary."

So saying, M. Durand leaped over the people who were still on the floor and ran toward the staircase, the redoubtable stick raised ready to chastise the culprit; but Jean did not await his father, he lightly descended the stairs, darted through the alleys, and ran home to his mother. The herbalist continued to pursue his son; he ran after him in the street, his cane in the air, exclaiming, "Wait for me, you rascal!" but Jean knew better than to wait, and, as a boy of fourteen runs much faster than a man of fifty-four, the son arrived a long time before the father. On seeing her son return alone, Madame Durand asked him what had passed, why he came back so early from M. Mistigris' and what had become of his father. Jean answered, laughing, that the ball had gone all wrong, that the dancers had been amusing themselves by turning somersaults in the antechamber, and that he had lost his father in the street.

But M. Durand arrived in his turn, out of breath and furious. He entered the shop with his cane raised and advanced toward his son; but the latter, jumping over the counter, escaped the paternal correction and ran to take refuge by locking himself up in his room. Madame Durand held her husband by the tail of the coat.

"What is the matter," said she, "in the name of heaven, speak, and don't hold your stick in the air like that, threatening your son, and assuming that Brutus-like expression, monsieur."

"There is no question of Brutus, madame," said the herbalist, throwing himself on a chair, "your son is guilty, he hath excelled himself in ill-doing this evening, and deserveth correction, 'qui bene amat bene castigat,' and I wish to prove to him that I am his father."

"And what has he done, monsieur, that he should put you in such a fury?"

The herbalist related all that had passed that evening at M. Mistigris.'

"And do you wish to beat your son for that?" said Madame Durand, "why, monsieur, that is only frolicsomeness."

"Frolicsomeness, madame, to frighten a whole company?"

"As if any one should be frightened by a few fulminating peas."

"Two ladies were made ill by them, and it will perhaps bring some malady upon them."

"They're squeamish humbugs."

"I myself, madame, as I unwittingly placed my foot on one of those explosive peas, felt a shock which came through the marrow of my spine to the roots of my hair."

"Had you been a soldier, monsieur, you would not have felt anything; and I am very sure that M. Bellequeue would have danced in the midst of torpedoes without cutting a caper the less."

"I am assured, madame, that you can find no apology for cords extended to cause the downfall

of ten or twelve decent persons of both sexes, who were turning somersaults promiscuously in the darkness?"

"It was a great deal more decent than if they had turned them in the light, monsieur."

"And our cousin, the worthy Mistigris, who hath possibly sprained an ankle?"

"You have remedies for everything, monsieur."

"Madame, you have made an excellent defence, but you cannot excuse your son in my eyes. The young man is no longer a child, it is time to govern him with firmness. I will excuse him from the cane in consideration of the principle, 'Moneat antequam feriat'; but he must conduct himself so as to avert it for the future; further, he shall be confined to his chamber for the space of a fortnight and be fed 'cum pane et aqua'—that is my ultimatum."

Madame Durand insisted no further, but went to console her son, and during the fortnight that Jean was condemned to pass in his room Catherine secretly gave him the means of going out, and carried him a fowl and a bottle of bordeaux, which she said would make him grow much faster than the bread and water ordered by M. Durand.

The penance imposed by the herbalist on his son did not render him more virtuous. The bordeaux and the pullet must rather have given him a taste for dainty meals, and the facility of going to play all day far from his father's sight had converted

the penance into a vacation. When a father wishes to punish and the mother wishes to forgive it is very difficult to render a child obedient. Before correcting others it is often necessary to correct one's self, and it is only when perfect accord reigns between parents that the children have the best example and the most grateful lessons.

Jean was nearly sixteen years of age when his godmother, Madame Grosbleu, died, leaving him all her fortune, which amounted to six thousand francs income. Madame Durand then said to her husband,—

"You see our son will now be in very easy circumstances, and it is needless to make him learn a trade."

M. Durand answered that if his son did nothing from morning till night he would necessarily employ his money in committing folly, and besides it was essential that a man should have some settled occupation, without which he would only bore himself and bore other people. M. Durand was right, and he had never spoken so well; but Madame Durand was persuaded that her son could never bore any one.

"Jean shall do as he pleases," she exclaimed, "he is possessed of wit, he will be a fine man, and he will have money; and with those qualifications, monsieur, I believe that any one could fill the highest offices of state." M. Durand asserted that, in order to hold the smallest office or commission,

it was necessary at least to write legibly and grammatically; but his wife answered that that might be necessary for subordinates, but not for superiors.

"At least, madame," said the herbalist, "refrain from informing your son what his godmother hath done for him. Should he be made aware that he already hath an independent fortune, he will commit more follies than ever."

As Bellequeue had also advised her that she should not tell the young man that he was rich, the mamma agreed not to instruct him on this point; but in order that he might experience some of the pleasure of his increased fortune, she secretly slipped a purse containing twenty-nine louis into his hand, saying,—

"It is a little present that your godmother left you when she died; use it moderately, but don't refuse yourself anything."

Jean put one piece of gold in his pocket and went to find his good friends Demar and Gervais. He offered to regale them with anything that they wished. Friends of this age never have to be begged to accept anything, and the three boys went into a café, where Demar gave Jean some lessons in billiards while a splendid luncheon was being prepared for them. Jean found the game of billiards very amusing and decided that he would often play it. Demar asked his friend why he had feasted them so nobly, and Jean drew the piece of gold from his pocket.

"It is a present from my godmother," said he; "I have a drawer full of pieces like this at home."

"You must spend the whole drawer full," said Gervais, while Demar seemed to be reflecting, as he looked with hungry eyes at the piece of gold which Jean still held in his hand; but the luncheon arrived and drove away all reflection.

Jean had ordered all that they had of the best in meats and wines. His mother had said to him, "Refuse yourself nothing," and he followed her counsel exactly. The three young men made the corks fly. Gervais had never been present at a similar feast; he was tipsy before the middle of the luncheon, because heads of sixteen are not strong enough to bear frequent bumpers. Presently Jean was in the same state as Gervais, and Demar alone preserved a little reason; he used it in trying to make Jean sensible of the happiness that would await them if all three left their parents, who wished to restrict their love of pleasure.

Although Jean was not at all restricted in his search for pleasure, he approved all that Demar said to him. These gentlemen drank to their friendship, to their sincere attachment. Gervais babbled, and each instant became more affected; the wine made him sensitive and he ended by weeping and kissing his two friends. Jean wished to appear self-possessed, but he could hardly hold his glass, and Demar profited by this moment to propose to his friends to ally themselves by a vow

that the future fortune of each one of them should be in common between the three friends, and that they should share together good and evil fortune. Demar and Gervais could not but gain by such an arrangement; however, Jean was one of the first to raise his hand and to press those of his friends. A new bumper sealed the youthful compact.

Poor Jean! you are allied with some very worthless fellows, where will such connections lead you? There are some who still have it that the friendships of childhood and the promises made at school are sacred. For a vow to be worth anything is it not necessary that those who pronounce it should know to what they are binding themselves? Can one, at the age for illusions, when he neither knows the world, nor people, nor himself, decide what he shall do in the future? It is, however, at college, it is in youth, that one is prodigal of vows.

These young fellows drank, swore and sang, and made a noise which sent away decent people who were in the café. The master of the house, not caring to lose all of his customers for three school boys who were getting tipsy, presented the bill to these gentlemen, trying politely to make them understand that to give vent to their noisy gayety they had much better be out-of-doors than under his roof, where they disturbed the peaceable customers who came to take a glass of choco-

late and read their papers. For answer, Jean threw the piece of gold on the counter, saying,—

"What is this lemonade-seller shilly-shallying about?"

"I think that he wants us to go," said Demar.

"Indeed, does he take us for gutter snipes?"

"He says that we are making too much noise," exclaimed Gervais.

"Yes, well then, in that case, we must shout still louder."

And these gentlemen intoned a chorus with the accompaniment of knives and forks. The restaurateur was angry, he again approached the young men and said to them,—

"Gentlemen, I beg you to retire, my place isn't a pothouse."

The three young men laughed in his face and knocked on the table in such a manner as to break the marble which covered it. Then the restaurateur signed to one of his waiters, who ran to find the guard at the neighboring post. Four fusiliers and a corporal presently arrived at the café. At sight of them Gervais hid under the table, Jean transformed his napkin into a turban, and shot bullets of bread crumbs at the corporal's nose. The soldiers advanced. Jean and Demar did not wish to leave, while Gervais, whom fear had made partly sober, threaded his way beneath the tables and gained the door. However, the corporal, tired of receiving bullets, said to the soldiers,—

"Seize these two men."

The two men, who had hardly thirty-three years between them, tried to resist and threw some plates at the soldiers, but their strength did not respond to their valor. They were soon seized and led away in the midst of the guards, followed by a crowd of loiterers whom the noise had attracted.

CHAPTER VI

A Family Gathering and Its Results. The Three Fugitives

While these events were transpiring at the restaurant, Bellequeue, who had been for his customary morning walk was returning peacefully homewards, with his hat in one hand and his cane in the other, when the sight of a great number of people made him raise his eyes to see the cause of the gathering, and he perceived his godson proudly marching between two fusiliers. The good man was horrified, he stopped; he could not at first believe his eyes, but it was really Jean whom they were taking to the guard house, with another boy of his own age.

In a moment M. Bellequeue recovered all the vivacity and agility of his youth, he followed the soldiers, pierced the crowd, and penetrated into the guard house almost as soon as the culprits. There he hastened to Jean — who was somewhat crest-fallen and dismayed at his godfather's appearance and the thought of his father's anger — to obtain an explanation of the affair, and was somewhat reassured on finding that the whole matter amounted only to a noise and a few broken plates.

He begged the commandant of the post to give up his godson; but the young man had resisted the armed force and the commandant assured him that he should be punished. Bellequeue threw the fault on the drunkenness caused by the wine, and the commandant declared that they should then be punished for being tipsy, and said that he would give the young men up to their fathers only. Bellequeue asserted that a godfather could act the part of a father on similar occasions to the present; but the commandant was inflexible and the godfather decided to go and inform Papa Durand of the matter. Bellequeue arrived, very much scared, at the herbalist's shop; he had put his hat on his head, which he did only on the most extraordinary occasions.

"I come on behalf of my godson," said he as he entered, "he is at the guard house."

"At the guard house," exclaimed Madame Durand, "Oh, my God, my son has enlisted."

And Catherine was obliged to apply a vinaigrette to her mistress's nose, as she was on the point of fainting, while the herbalist exclaimed,—

"My son is at the guard house! he must have been insulting the sentinel."

"Calm yourselves," said Bellequeue, "it is no great matter, it is only for making a little noise in a café, after breakfasting with some friends. It is a lesson for them, it will teach them to leave wine alone for the present. Come, my dear Durand,

come and say that you are his father and they will give you back your son."

"Go at once, run there, monsieur," said his wife.

"One moment, madame," said M. Durand. "If my son has got himself put in the guard house it is not for nothing, and he deserveth that I should leave him there. In truth, he is a pleasing, an amiable youth. To be put in the guard house at sixteen years of age promises well for his future. If he had studied herbs, madame, he would not now be in the custody of fusiliers, 'studia adolescentiam alunt senectutem oblectant.'"

Madame Durand felt that her husband was perhaps right, but she again begged him to go and deliver their son; and M. Durand, who in his heart also loved the culprit, finally went with Bellequeue to the guard house, where the business was settled. They set the two young men at liberty, although Demar was not reclaimed by his father; but Bellequeue was willing to answer for him to oblige his godson.

By this time Jean was somewhat subdued and he did not say a word as he followed his father. He expected a severe lecture, but M. Durand remained silent, and on arriving at home he contented himself with leading his son into his room and there locking him up, putting the key in his pocket; then he went down to his wife and said to her,—

"You see, madame, that our son doth not conduct himself precisely like a jewel. If we allow him always to be master of his own time and actions he will be often put in the guard house, and it will end by their wanting to keep him there. Besides, he is intimate with some very bad fellows; it is absolutely imperative that something should be done to put a stop to all that."

"Well, monsieur, what is your opinion?" said Madame Durand.

"My opinion, if you must know it, is to convoke a gathering of our relations that we may consult with them as to the best means of enduing Jean with a little wisdom, of which, in sooth, he hath sore need."

The adventure at the guard house having scared Madame Durand, she consented to the assembling of the family; and the same evening the herbalist wrote to all those who had assisted at Jean's baptism, and who were still living, that they should come to his house the next day to lighten his judgment with their wisdom. There were only lacking the godmother; the domino player, who had died of a jaundice brought on by having been vanquished at his favorite game five times in succession, and M. Endolori, who had given up the ghost after taking three medicines at once in order that he might have better health. While awaiting the meeting of the next day, M. Durand, who mistrusted the weakness of his wife and Catherine,

insisted on himself carrying nourishment to his son, who this time was put rigorously on bread and water, which seemed a far greater punishment to Jean because he still had in his drawer so many of those gold pieces with which he could have made such good breakfasts.

The relations and friends were prompt in responding to M. Durand's invitation. The first to arrive were Monsieur and Madame Renard, who still followed their trade as hosiers, but who beside their nightcaps now sold little Greek fezes, because the past six years had made a great revolution in fashion as in business, and they had often seen the same person adopt the most opposite colors; but in the midst of all these upsettings cotton nightcaps remained stationary. There are some things which will never perish. Then came Monsieur and Mademoiselle Fourreau, for despite her cheerfulness and gayety, her infantile manners, and her flageolet voice, Mademoiselle Aglae had remained a spinster, which did not prevent her from still being the same mentally; as to her physical appearance, that was different, she had nothing left of the child. Later came M. Mistigris, who had had no desire to give dancing lessons to his little cousin since the evening of the explosions and the somersaults, followed by Madame Ledoux, who had not been forgotten, and who, despite her sixty-five years, was always talking about her fourteen children and her three husbands. Madame Moka

had also received an invitation, because, being interested in Jean, she had always come to the herbalist's house and had sent in a good many customers. Finally, Bellequeue made his appearance, dressed in black, in order that he might have more weight in the deliberation. When each one was seated in the bedroom, which served also as a drawing-room, M. Durand bowed to the company and said,—

"Ladies and gentlemen, you know why I have desired you to meet me here."

"Yes, we know," said Bellequeue.

"I don't know why," said M. Renard.

"I think I have forgotten why," said M. Fourreau.

"I don't think I ever knowed," said Madame Moka.

"Tell us again," said Madame Ledoux, "that is the best thing you can do. My husband, the bailiff, always repeated the same thing twice over for me, it is a very good habit."

"Ha, ha! it's funny," said Mademoiselle Aglae.

"It is on the subject of our son Jean."

"Yes," said Madame Durand, interrupting her husband, "it is about our son that we wish to speak to you. He was sixteen years old on the fifteenth of last March."

"Oh, I remember his christening perfectly well; it was very cold on that day, and you had

forgotten your black silk cap, M. Renard, and you caught cold in returning."

"It was very slippery," said M. Mistigris, "if my equilibrium had not been perfect, I should have broken my nose in the Rue Pastourelle."

"There is no prettier boy than my cousin now," said Mademoiselle Aglae, "he is bigger than me, ha, ha, ha!"

"He has the makings of a fine man," said Bellequeue, "he holds himself straight; his hair is very thick."

"Yes," said Madame Ledoux, "he resembles my eleventh, who was the — who was the — Oh, my God, I don't remember now whether his father was the stationer or the cabinet-maker. It is astonishing how one forgets these things."

"Gentlemen and ladies," resumed the herbalist, "we are straying from the question. My son Jean is sixteen years old, and that he is very strong is true; but he knows nothing, and he wishes to do nothing."

"Oh, monsieur, you are going too far," said Madame Durand, "he knows nothing! Ask his godfather if he doesn't know how to hold a foil."

"Yes, and with much grace," said Bellequeue; "he can also smoke a cigar without being upset by it."

"But he doesn't know how to dance," said M. Mistigris, shrugging his shoulders. "I spent four months without being able to put a single step

into his head, from whence I conclude that he has very little talent."

"Little talent," cried Madame Durand, throwing an angry glance at the old dancing-master, "why, cousin, at your age you cannot expect to teach pupils as you did in your youth."

"Cousin," said Mistigris, rising in order to be more impressive, "I lately instructed two wine-merchant's clerks of the Rue Saint-Avoie. Go to the Grand Chaumière and see them dance. You'll see if I don't know how to teach any longer."

And to prove that his talent remained unabated, he essayed a pirouette before reseating himself, and fell back on Madame Moka's knees, saying, "I stepped on a nail."

"I had one boy who danced very prettily," said Madame Ledoux, "that was my fourteenth, or my second, or my last, I can't quite remember."

"Let us return to the question," said the herbalist, "we must try not to depart from it."

"Ha, ha, ha! that's right," said Mademoiselle Aglae, laughing, "if they once get away from it you'll never get them back to it, hi, hi, hi!"

"My son knows how to fight and to smoke, 'concedo'; he even knows how to swear very energetically, and it appears that he also wishes to learn how to get tipsy."

"One of my husbands got tipsy, I don't know whether it was the bailiff, the stationer or the cabinet-maker."

"As to that," said the herbalist, "I confess that he has nothing with which to be reproached, and—"

"It is astonishing," said Madame Moka, "how many young men one sees who are perverted without any one expecting it of them."

"To return to the matter of which I was speaking," said M. Durand, "my son is sixteen years of age, and he does nothing from morning till night but run like a vagabond about the streets and play with idle rascals—by so doing he dishonors a father who has passed his life in studying the secrets of nature, and I ask you what we can do to correct him."

"If he knew how to dance," said M. Mistigris, "I could find him something to do at once. I am received in great houses, houses of men in office; but how could you ask me to present a young man who doesn't know how to dance. They would make fun of me."

"If he had a taste for hosiery," said M. Renard, "one might push him in the stocking, in the woolen vest trade; but he must know how to add and be well up in the decimal rules."

"Formerly," said Bellequeue, "I proposed to you to make a soldier of him; but times are changed, we are at peace, and I do not see the desirability of sending him to pass his youth in the barracks."

"First of all," said M. Fourreau, "I think that

if the young man, but one can't tell — it's rather a ticklish matter!"

"Monsieur is very right," said Madame Moka, "not that I wants to say that the evil is without remedy."

"I had a child who gave me a great deal of trouble," said Madame Ledoux, "it was one of my girls, no — it was one of my boys, I don't know which now, still it was one of those of my three husbands, I do not know what foolishness he had committed; but what is certain about it is that — I don't know what we did about it now."

"It's a pity," said Mistigris, "that we should have been brought out of our way for the little cousin."

"Why," said Mademoiselle Aglae mincingly, "if he, hi, hi, hi! if they, ha, ha, ha! if you, ho, ho, ho! it would be a good joke to marry him."

"To marry him," said Madame Durand, "what are you thinking of? He's only sixteen years old!"

"My faith," said Bellequeue, "if he were only eighteen, I shouldn't be far from advising you to do that myself."

"My son is still a child," said the herbalist gravely, "and incapable of comprehending the consequences of marriage; he doth not know how to make herb tea, how do you suppose he could undertake the care of a household?"

"Besides," said Madame Durand, "what woman would want such a young husband?"

"Oh, one can't say as to that," answered Mademoiselle Aglae, wriggling about, "sometimes, hi, hi, hi! you could probably find one."

"Marriage is inadmissible," said the herbalist, "but I repeat that my son Jean must do something else besides play at pitch-and-toss or quoits or ball with the worthless fellows of the neighborhood. That might pass when he was eight years old; but when he is sixteen he is no longer a child, and matters cannot remain 'in statu quo.'"

"Well, then, monsieur," said Madame Durand impatiently, "you must find some occupation yourself that will be agreeable to that dear child, whom you treat like a negro, and whom you have never loved because he hasn't a taste for botany. Do you think I want to send him to the West Indies or the East Indies, to exile him from the paternal roof because he, being gifted with a keen imagination and a restless mind, could not endure to sit behind a counter? Answer, monsieur, answer, and don't remain yourself 'in sta cocu!'"

This was the first time that Madame Durand had ever tried to use any language other than her own; but her memory served her but poorly, and the quotation, far from pleasing the herbalist, seemed to augment his ill-humor.

"Madame, I beg of you not to speak Latin again," he exclaimed, "you commit solecisms in so doing."

"I don't care what I commit, monsieur; but I say before my family and our friends that it was your severity that has made my son take such an aversion to study."

"Say, madame, that it is your weakness that hath spoiled him, that hath destroyed the good qualities that he should have had, and rendered him wilful and disobedient."

"I remember, monsieur, that you wanted to make him learn your business as a child; it was by means of the whip."

"If he had received it more often, madame, he would have known to-day all that an herbalist should know."

"Come, M. Durand, my dear neighbor," said M. Bellequeue, going from husband to wife, "is this right? — are we going to quarrel? For shame, it is such a pretty household, the example of the neighborhood. It isn't probable that you invited your neighbors and friends to hear you dispute."

The relations were listening very tranquilly to the quarrel, without trying to end it. Madame Renard looked on smiling, M. Renard was glancing at his wife with a mischievous expression, Mademoiselle Aglae was laughing, M. Fourreau was opening his eyes wide, Mistigris was looking at his feet and seemed pleased that his little cousin was the cause of the dispute, Madame Ledoux was trying to remember with which of her husbands and for which of her children she had had a simi-

lar quarrel, and Madame Moka murmured from time to time, "Oh, heavens, I seen married people quarrelling often."

Catherine's arrival changed the scene. The servant came excitedly into the room, exclaiming,—

"Oh, my God! madame, oh, my God! M. Jean has gone."

"Gone," cried Madame Durand, and everybody rose in disorder, while the herbalist begged the maid to explain herself.

"You know well, monsieur," said Catherine, "that only this morning you gave me the key to Jean's room, saying to me, 'You will go and bring him to us when it is time.' While waiting for that, I wished to go and see if the young man had need of anything and if he was not tired of being so long in his room. I went in and took a good look around, but there was no M. Jean; his bureau was open, his drawers were empty, he must have made a parcel of his effects, and as the window opens on the roof which leads to the attic he must have escaped by that."

"My son has left us," said Madame Durand, and she fell fainting into a chair. Catherine and Madame Moka went to her aid, M. Durand betook himself to his son's room, and Madame Ledoux went to relate this adventure to everybody she knew; Bellequeue took his cane and his hat, exclaiming, "I answer for it that I will find him again." And the relations returned passively

to their homes, saying to themselves, "Since Jean is gone it is useless to trouble ourselves longer about what they can make of him."

At the age of sixteen a young man will not allow himself to be made to do penance on bread and water, to be threatened with a ruler and treated like a child. When a youth has attained the age of reason and can understand the consequences of a fault and what may follow it, it is only by appealing to his reason, his heart, by seeking to enlighten his mind so as to rectify his judgment, that one may hope to correct him. Some will perhaps say that there are young people who have no minds, who are lacking in reasoning faculties, and whose hearts are closed to all good feeling; then I say they are incorrigible, and bread and water will not render them any better.

So Jean, who had been used from infancy to do according to his own will, was at first wholly surprised at being really prisoner in his room. Every moment he expected a visit from his mother or from Catherine; but neither his mother nor Catherine came, and during that evening he saw his father only. The latter brought him his trappist's meal, and departed without speaking to his son, merely remarking, "Suum cuique tribuito'; and as Jean did not understand Latin he thought that that meant, 'You shall not have anything else to eat," and as soon as his father had shut the door, he angrily kicked over the water jug, threw

the bread out of the window, and then went to bed, saying,—

"I would much rather never eat than make such a meal as that."

But the next morning, on awakening, his stomach made him feel that he had not supped the evening before; he thought of the bread which he had disdained, looked around him, and remembered that he had flung it out of the window, which he now regretted. Thus it is that we sigh after that which we have for some time disdained; but one often commits this fault during the course of his life, it is therefore very excusable at sixteen.

Jean walked impatiently about his room, he shook the door, which was firmly locked, and muttering and swearing, for you know that that was what he could do best, he said,—

"Are they going to leave me long shut up in this room. I am hungry. Hang it all, my father certainly cannot intend to let me die of hunger. It is true that if I had not thrown the bread out of the window I should still have had it for this morning; but to put me on such a diet, when I have twenty-four pieces of gold with which I could feast myself so well, and feast my friends too. My poor friends, I haven't seen them since our adventure of yesterday; I am sure they are uneasy about me."

Every moment augmented Jean's impatience and hunger, he took his gold and counted it, then

stamped his feet with anger. At length he exclaimed, as he suddenly opened his window, "No, by all the devils, I won't stay here. If it amuses my father to keep me in a cage, it is not at all amusing to me to be there."

Jean examined the roofs. There was only about three steps from his window to another belonging to a loft. The way to it although short was perilous, but at sixteen years of age one will risk his life laughingly; it is, however, the age when life is most agreeable. Yet at sixty one takes a thousand precautions to avoid death, even when one is overwhelmed with calamities. We are, it seems, hardly more reasonable at sixty than we are at sixteen.

Jean had his gold in his pocket and one foot on the roof when he thought better of it, came back into his room, opened his bureau, and quickly made a big parcel of his effects, saying to himself,—

"I have an idea that I shan't come back tomorrow nor the day after. It will be much better to let my father's anger have time to cool, and it is prudent to take with me what I shall need; besides, these things belong to me, they are my property, and I can dispose of them."

Having made his parcel, he grasped it in his hand, and jumped on to the roof. In two strides he was in the attic, then on the staircase, which led into the alley. He went down without mak-

ing any noise, fearing to meet any of his relatives; but they were then assembled together deliberating on his fate. Jean did not deliberate, he quickly left the alley and ran to the Place Royal to find his good friends.

Demar and Gervais had in fact been very impatient to see Jean again. One does not easily forget a friend who gives one splendid breakfasts, and who can give one many more of them. The little catastrophe which had followed the banquet the evening before was nothing in the eyes of Jean's comrades. This was not the first time that these gentlemen had got themselves into trouble; but one of them always got out of it by his effrontery and the other by making use of his legs.

"Here he is! here he is! It's him, it's Jean!" shouted Demar and Gervais with one accord.

"Yes, it's me, and I had some trouble in getting here," said Jean, wiping the perspiration which was running down his forehead. "I ran, oh, how I ran, for I was afraid that some one might discover my flight; you don't know that they shut me up, put me on bread and water in my room, like a brat of six years."

"It's outrageous, it's shameful to shut up a man of our age, for we are men now."

"I should think so; why, I am five foot three inches tall. A pretty good height — I should say."

"And my mustache has already begun to grow," added Gervais.

"At last I made up my mind; I said to myself, 'I am not made to be a slave.'"

"Bravo! That's the style."

"I didn't want to stay and live on bread and water while I have in my pocket what will buy feasts fit for a wedding."

"Hang it! you'd be a big simpleton if you'd done that."

"Then I put my treasure in my pocket, made a parcel of my things, climbed over the roofs to the garret window, and here I am, ready to go with you, by George! to the end of the world."

"You are a good fellow, Jean," said Demar, throwing himself on the fugitive's neck, "and you did well to escape. Did you take all your money?"

"Yes, all, it is here — in this pocket. Well now, are you coming with me?"

"Certainly, we will never part."

"In that case, we must start as quickly as possible, for my godfather Bellequeue will very likely come after me; but perhaps you need to go home first, you others?"

"What for?" said Demar, "I have my wardrobe on me, and it is needless for me to go to say good-by to my father, since he has already put me out twice and told me not to come back again."

"And I have been flogged already this morning," said Gervais, "They are always calling me idle, because I like to play better than work. I have still an old pair of trousers and a vest at

home, but I shan't bother about them, I shall leave them; besides, since Jean has some clothes and everything is in common between us, his will serve for all three of us."

"That's right," said Demar.

"Well, fellows, we'll be off. What road shall we take?"

"No matter which, let's get to the barrier, and then into the country."

"We must have something to eat first, and after that we can decide."

The three scholars started off, they reached the Boulevard, then the Faubourg, and then the Menilmontant barrier. Jean was dying of hunger, but he would not stop for it until he was in a safe place. When they had passed the barrier they looked for a public house of good appearance where they could get a good meal. Public houses are not lacking at Menilmontant, and the fugitives went into the one which appeared by its chimney to have the hottest kitchen fire, and were served with dinner, but as Jean had not forgotten the adventure of the evening before, and as he did not care to see the guard, who might put an obstacle in the way of his wish to travel, this time he drank very moderately and advised his friends to imitate him.

The finest dinner at a restaurant in Menilmontant is much cheaper than a luncheon in a café in Paris. Jean was very much astonished that it

did not take one of his gold pieces to pay for the dinner, and after he had settled the bill he exclaimed,—

"Well, fellows, we have enough to have a good time on for a long time."

"Then let us have a good time," said Demar.

"Let us have a good time," repeated Gervais.

They resumed their way, they reached the country, laughing and running, and playing at quoits and leap-frog. From time to time Demar wished to argue in favor of their expedition, and stopping in a pretty spot or where there was a fine view, he would exclaim,—

"See, fellows, how fresh everything is in the country. Isn't one a hundred times better off here than in his room? isn't it much better to breathe this grand air than to work in an office? Isn't it more natural to be free than to be shut up?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," said Gervais. "Liberty, pleasure, good dinners, those are worth living for."

"Undoubtedly," said Jean, "man was made to do according to his own will; besides, my godfather has often said that travelling forms a young man."

"Well, when we are formed enough, we will return home; but don't let us forget," resumed Demar, "the vow that we have made — eternal friendship and community of property."

"Oh, we have sworn it; besides we are not children."

"Nor weathercocks."

"Oh, fellows," said Gervais, "here is a fine place to play leap-frog, that'll help our digestion and give us a good appetite for this evening."

The idea was accepted, they began to play, they ran, they jumped; but in a moment or two, Gervais perceived that in jumping over his companions he had torn one leg of his trousers, of which the material was pretty well worn.

"Jingo! I'm in a fix now," cried he. "Look here, fellows, I've done it prettily, I can't go into a village like this, they would make game of me. What am I going to do? I haven't another pair."

They went and seated themselves under a tree, where Jean opened his parcel and spreading its contents before his companions, brought to sight two pairs of trousers, one gray and faded, the other blue and quite new.

"I'll take those," said Gervais, seizing the blue, Jean raising no objections.

"Wait a bit! he's not so stupid as he looks," said Demar. "He's taken the best ones, and if I should tear mine I must content myself with the gray ones, which are all stained."

"What does that matter to you?" said Gervais. "It has nothing to do with you, since they belong to Jean."

"It matters to me as much as to Jean, since we have everything in common, and what belongs to him belongs to me."

"Well, then, if they belong to you, they belong to me also," answered Gervais.

"All the same, I shan't let you put them on," said Demar, snatching the trousers from his comrade's hands.

"But I will have them."

"You shan't have them."

"I shall."

And these pleasing young gentlemen struggled together, and ended by fighting and rolling on the grass for the possession of the blue pantaloons.

Jean, seeing that the quarrel was serious, ran between the combatants and separated them, saying,—

"Well, fellows, is that the eternal friendship we've sworn? If everything is in common between us, I don't see any reason why you should fight each other to see who should put on the blue trousers. Here, take them Gervais, since yours are torn, and don't be so foolish again, any one would think we were three children."

Gervais put on the trousers, smiling triumphantly; Demar dared say nothing further and tried to hide his bad humor.

Gervais having repaired his toilet, they resumed their way; but first he showed his old, torn trousers to his comrades.

"What shall I do with these, boys?"

"Hang it, throw them away, that's all they're good for," said Demar.

"We might perhaps get them mended by some inn servant," said Jean, "then they'll be good to wear again."

"You may be sure I won't put them on," said Demar.

"Nor me," said Gervais. "Come, I know what I'll do with them, I am going to hang them on one of these branches to scare the birds."

Gervais climbed the tree, attached the old trousers to a high branch, then came down, and they went on.

It was dark when the young travellers arrived at Bagnolet. They had come but a short distance during the day, because they had so often stopped to play and had not followed the right route.

"We must sleep here," said Jean.

"Yes, and have a good supper," said Gervais, "and tomorrow after breakfast, we'll start on our travels again."

"But what's the matter with this town, I don't see any restaurant."

"It's a village, stupid; it isn't lighted like Menilmontant."

"Well, fellows, when any one is travelling, one must expect some ups and downs."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that we shan't always find good kitchens."

"Oh, boys, I smell food, there's a restaurant somewhere around here."

In fact, our travellers now came to an inn and they deliberately entered and went into the great room into which the kitchen opened, shouting,—

"Hi! can we sup and sleep here?"

The host, his wife and the servant came together out of the kitchen to see the people who had arrived, and appeared surprised at the youth of the three newcomers.

"Honest man, can you lodge us and give us something to eat?" said Demar, assuming an important tone which did not accord well with his jacket and cap.

"These gentlemen have come on an excursion into the country," said the host smiling.

"Well, what is that to you?" said Gervais.

"Oh, we shall pay you well," said Jean, tapping his pocket, "the nuggets are there."

"In that case we'll serve you with our best. We don't sleep people usually, but all the same you shall have beds."

"And above all, a good supper," said Gervais.

"Be easy, gentlemen, you'll be pleased."

The young men seated themselves at the table, on which there was no tablecloth; and while the supper was being got ready, they drank a glass of wine and the host came to chat with them.

"You are on your vacation, are you not?" said he to them.

"Yes, we are on our vacation," said Jean smiling, and turning toward his comrades he made one

of those grimaces which are in use among workmen when they tell a lie to any one.

"You have come to look about here? You are right, the neighborhood is charming, and there are some very pretty houses in our village."

"What is the name of your village?"

"Bagnolet, why, didn't you know you were at Bagnolet?"

"Why, it is all the same to us whether we are at Bagnolet or Rognolet."

"Gentlemen," resumed the innkeeper, "if you like, tomorrow I will show you the house where General Dupernon formerly lived, who, after drinking twenty glasses of wine, took a leap twenty-two feet long in his garden."

"He jumped higher than I can," said Jean.

"As he became old he made many changes in his garden, but he always kept intact the alley where he had jumped the twenty-two feet. I will take you to see it."

"Say, now, if you can let us see some pipes, that will amuse us much better."

"What, you smoke already?"

"A little, uncle."

"Do they smoke then, at your boarding-school?"

"You bet they do."

"Oh, I always have pipes for the wagoners who stop here; I will go and get some for you."

"He is a gossip and a curious fellow, this innkeeper," said Gervais.

"Gentlemen," said Demar, "have you noticed that the servant is pleasing?"

"Well, what if she is, what's that to do with us?" said Jean.

"It makes it more agreeable, and then later on — one doesn't know."

"Oh, you are always thinking of something stupid."

"Attention, fellows," said Gervais, "here is the supper, and that is more interesting than the servant."

The supper was composed of veal and of rabbit, and the dishes were peppered in such a manner as to take away the appetite, but the young men found everything excellent, and very quickly caused the dishes to disappear. Gervais wished for some dainties for dessert, but the host had no dainties except Gerome cheese, and they had to content themselves with that. At the close of the meal these gentlemen lit their pipes, and the host watched them with admiration as they smoked.

"Young as they are, they smoke like wagoners," he exclaimed, "they must go to a very good school."

The travellers had drunk a good deal and soon fell asleep over their pipes; then the host advised them to go up to bed, and they followed the servant, who led them to their room. Three beds had been got ready for them in a very large room, which was used for wedding feasts, when they had

them at the inn. Gervais began by choosing the bed which was the furthest from the door and window, and he seated himself upon it, saying,—

"This bed's mine."

"Well, if he hasn't got a cheek!" said Demar, "he's chosen the best place."

And he went up to Gervais, took him by the feet, rolled him on to the floor and took his place on the bed. Gervais picked himself up and went to return the compliment, but Demar was expecting him and gave him a vigorous kick in the side. Gervais howled terribly, and Jean was obliged to get up to go and make the peace.

"Will you never have done quarrelling?" he said to them.

"It is this ugly sneak, he's taken my bed," said Gervais, crying, and holding his side.

"Not any more your bed than it is mine," said Demar, sneeringly, "you always want the best places, the bed in the snuggest corner. But I shan't give it up to you, I am here and I am going to stay here."

"Come, Gervais, go and get into bed over there, and don't cry any more. Is it right that friends should fight like that at every turn?"

Gervais went to bed muttering. Jean got back into his own bed and fell asleep, pondering to himself,—

"What's the use of having anything in common if one is disputing all the time? and when

each one is his own master nobody has the right to be master over another. It's very funny that they don't understand that."

Jean slept very late. On awakening, the fumes of wine and tobacco no longer troubled his brain; he looked around him and was astonished to find himself in an inn chamber, he thought he was still in his own room at his parents' house. For the first time he reflected as to what would follow his flight, he thought of his father, of his mother — of his mother above all, who loved him so much and who, no doubt, was very much grieved at his absence. It was with the money that she had given him that he proposed to live far from the paternal home. Something told him that this was a bad use to put it to; a sigh escaped him, tears moistened his eyelids. Had he been alone he would have returned now to his mother, though he had again been put on bread and water; but he could not decide to leave his comrades, a false shame held him. Demar and Gervais would make fun of him. How many faults people persevere in because they cannot support the jibes and sneers of despicable companions when they should rather pride themselves on acting differently from such creatures.

Demar and Gervais, who had long been up, at that moment came back into the room and that put an end to Jean's reflections. The latter remarked a great change in his comrades' costume.

Demar had taken from the parcel a pretty coat, a cashmere vest, the gray pantaloons and white linen. Gervais had thought that to go with the fine new trousers he must have something other than his jacket and his dirty collar, so he had possessed himself of the other coat, and had completed his toilet with a waistcoat and a white cravat. In fact, there remained nothing of the voluminous parcel which Jean had carried except some shirts and some stockings.

"Why, how fine you are," said Jean, examining them.

"Yes, we have taken from the parcel what suited us," said Demar.

"We look much better, don't we?"

"Hang it, you have taken my best coats!"

"That doesn't matter to you, since everything is in common between us. What one lacks, the other should give him if he has it; it seems to me that that is quite fair."

"Oh, yes, of course that's fair," resumed Jean, hiding a slight grimace which he had made at sight of his coats upon his comrades' backs.

"And in regard to the money," resumed Demar, "let us count what we have left, so we may know what ground we stand on."

Jean drew his pieces of gold from his waistcoat pocket and counted them on the table.

"As for me, my account will be very soon made," said Gervais, "I haven't a sou."

"I have twenty-four sous on me," said Demar, "here they are, we will add them to the pile."

So saying he threw his money on Jean's.

"Now," said he, "we must divide it into equal parts and each take his share."

"What's the use of that," said Jean.

"Haven't you sworn to share with us your good as well as your bad fortune? Money is your good fortune, share it with us."

"But since we are not separating, I do not see the necessity of dividing our money, providing that the one who has it pays; that is enough."

"In fact," said Gervais, "providing that Jean pays always, that is all that I ask. Oh, I am not ridiculous."

"No, no," said Demar, "we must divide it, that's the only thing there is to do, and it needn't prevent Jean from paying when he wants to."

"As for me, I won't divide it," said Jean, putting all his money back into his pocket. "You've got on my coats, that's all right; but as to this gold, if I share it with you, I wish, at least, to have the pleasure of spending it."

Jean had said this in a very decided tone, and as Demar, though seventeen years of age, was not so large nor so strong as our hero, he did not think it wise to insist, and there was no further question of dividing. Gervais had had the thought to order breakfast, and the servant now came to tell the young men that the meal was ready in the

room where they had supped the night before. Demar, to console himself for not having a part of the funds, insisted on kissing the servant, but the latter repulsed him, calling him "little master." This epithet made his comrades laugh and put Demar into a passion, and in order to re-establish his self-respect he began to tease the servant again, but in place of the kiss he got a slap in the face.

"That'll teach you to tease the girls," said Jean, laughing.

"Come to breakfast," said Gervais, "that will make him forget his temper."

The young men breakfasted copiously. Jean paid the host's bill without questioning it, then the travellers resumed their way, continuing to go farther from Paris; but the accord which had reigned between them the evening before seemed lessened. Demar was still out of temper, Gervais no longer played, for fear of spoiling his fine toilet, and Jean sighed from time to time as he thought of his mother and of Paris.

CHAPTER VII

The Freak

During several weeks of delightful summer weather Jean and his two young friends ran about the outskirts of Paris, sometimes stopping for days in a neighborhood which pleased them or where they found good cheer.

The young travellers passed their time gayly running about and playing in the country with the indifference of extreme youth to time and money, but they never forgot to return to the inn at meal times; and whenever there was a festival or fair in progress in any village in which they happened to be staying, they indulged in all the games and sports which are usual in such places on such occasions, and which to them had all the merit of novelty. Jean pulled at the goose, Demar drew from the little lottery, and Gervais turned somersaults to get wafers or macaroons; they paid for everything they had without bargaining, and thanks to the distribution of Jean's wardrobe they were all three very properly dressed and might, but for the freedom of their manners and language, have been taken for young people of good family who were spending their vacation by travelling in the

country. The peasants found them very pleasing because they swore, smoked and drank with them, and the countrywomen with whom they sometimes danced did not always give the boys slaps in the face when the latter wanted to kiss them.

"This is all right," said Jean, after he had taken part in a dance on the green with a stout country girl. "One can get some fun out of dancing like this. It is not like a ball at my cousin Mistigris', where one must first bow to his lady, then hold his feet in position and make them point out, or glide them round in order to be graceful. Here I have taken a stout girl by the hand, I have led her to the dance, we have jumped about right and left, without troubling ourselves about our neighbors, and I say that this is much better fun."

"Certainly," said Gervais, "there's no fun where people have to mind their p's and q's. If I don't want to keep time to the music it seems to me that I ought to be able to do as I like."

"Gentlemen," said Demar, "ceremony, bowing and scraping and all such customs are only good for fools; but look you, when one has any mind one should put one's self above all that, because a man ought to show that he is a man."

"That's right," said Jean.

"That is very well said," said Gervais.

But when one eats three meals a day and has everything served of the best, when one refuses

one's self no pleasure, and when one never bargains about anything, one very quickly sees the bottom of his purse, even when it contains twenty-four louis. One morning, after having paid the expenses, Jean said to his companions,—

"Boys, do you know that there are only two pieces of gold in my purse."

"That is very singular," said Demar.

"It's a great pity," said Gervais.

"When we have spent these last two louis what shall we do?"

"Jingo!" said Gervais, scratching his ear, "I don't know how we shall pay for our dinners."

"Oh, well, we must try, betwixt the three of us, to get some money from somebody," said Demar.

"How can we do that?"

"How can we do that? By jingo! you'll see. One thing is certain, I shan't go back to my father's."

"Nor I to my parents," said Gervais, "they would want to send me to work; but not a bit of it."

"Besides, boys, we can't part; we are inseparable."

"Certainly, and then we are much better here together than at home."

Jean said nothing, he seemed to be reflecting. They now entered the small town of Coulommiers.

"This is a very pleasant place," said Demar.

"Yes," added Gervais, "this is a town, this is; one ought to get good fish to eat here, there's a river passing by it."

"Oh, fellows, here is a restaurant almost as fine as the ones we have in Paris. Let's go in and have some dinner."

"But," said Jean, "we must try now to spare our money, and not to order without knowing—"

"Bah! there is plenty of time for that. Let us dine first, we will calculate after."

They went into the restaurant at Coulommiers and were presented with the bill of fare, which rivalled those of Paris. Gervais was in ecstasy on reading the different styles in which they served mutton and veal, and exclaimed,—

"We'll have some of that, and of that, and of that."

"Yes," said Jean, "and we shall spend one of our louis."

"What then, we shall still have one left."

"But afterwards?"

"Afterwards! we shall have dined well; that's the essential thing just now."

"You think of nothing but eating."

"And you of nothing but moralizing,"

"We shouldn't have troubled you to take care of the cash, for you grumble every time that you have to pay."

"It occurs to me that the cash was mine in the first place."

"No, it belongs to us, since we have all put everything in common."

"All put? You mean it was me who put everything; you put nothing, you others."

"Well, I hope you are not going to reproach us now. You're a famous friend, you are."

For the first time they quarrelled at dinner time, but the accord which reigned when they believed themselves rich was already troubled when they found the funds low; however, the soup came, and Jean exclaimed,—

"After all, spend what remains to us if you wish; it is all the same to me."

Dinner finished, they went out to walk in the town, and our young people learned that the next day was open market, which is almost a fair, and attracts into the neighborhood many people from the outskirts.

"By jingo!" exclaimed Demar, "this'll be a famous time to try and earn some money by playing a little farce for the peasants of the neighborhood."

"What kind of a farce?" said Gervais.

"I don't know yet, that we must think about."

"Just so," said Jean, "if it's a farce, I'm there."

The young men returned to the inn where they expected to sleep, and while supping each one of them thought of an amusing way of earning money.

"How if we were to play some tricks with cards," said Demar.

"Oh, the country people are quite as clever at that as we are."

"I," said Gervais, "know how to support myself on my hands with my feet in the air for three minutes."

"They'll already have seen that."

"I can swallow twine," said Demar.

"That's too old."

"I can take a centime off from the end of my nose while turning a club."

"That's not good enough; Gervais, you have such a splendid digestion, can't you swallow a knife?"

"Oh, no, I can't do that."

"Try a bit."

"No, it is useless, that won't go."

"Ah, fellows, if we had only some curiosity to show, that would be fine; country people are very curious, and we could make a great deal of money."

"The deuce! what is there that we can show peasants that they have never seen?"

"Oh, fellows," said Jean, "I have a delightful idea, let's show them a freak such as one sees on the Boulevard du Temple in Paris."

"A freak! — but we haven't one."

"Do you believe that those who show them have them any more than we have? It is only a question of how we can make one. Between us three it seems to me that we might easily manage that."

"Jingo! Demar's right, let us make a freak, let us make a monster, some sort of a curiosity."

"Let's see, fellows, who will be the freak, Gervais, eh?"

"Yes, he is quite ugly enough for a freak now, that will do."

"I am very willing."

"Demar shall call the people to the door, and I will be the showman."

"That's the way. The question now is, what shall we make? A giant?"

"Oh, no, you would have to have stilts and cardboard legs."

"A fish?"

"We should have to have a costume for that,"

"Oh, if you only had some oyster shells to cover your vest and trousers, and a dozen or so attached to your hair, you would make a superb fish. You could lie on the ground on your stomach, and you could pretend to swim."

"Yes, we haven't any oyster shells. Think of something else."

"Jingo! it's a difficult matter to make a freak, above all, when one has no costume."

"Wait a bit," said Jean, striking his forehead, "do you see, down there in the corner, that big pasteboard head, which must have been left in this inn by some milliner?"

"Yes, what of that?"

"Can you stand on your head, Gervais?"

"Yes, for a little while, by putting my back against something."

"That's very good, we have found our freak now."

"What do you mean?"

"You shall stand on your head, we'll hide your legs with your coat, and we'll make false arms with straw, and we'll fix this head in the collar of the coat on your feet, which we'll adorn with a wig and a hat, then we shall be able to show a man with two heads, one on top and the other on the ground."

"That's really not a bad idea."

"Yes, but if on looking at the head which is on top any one should recognize it?"

"You don't let people come close up to a freak to look at it; besides you will be in a dark place, and then we must risk something. Come, it's settled, we'll make a man with two heads."

They thought it necessary to immediately have a rehearsal, and went into the town to buy an old wig, which they fixed on the pasteboard head, to which they also gave mustaches and eyebrows with a burned cork. They hid the neck in a cravat, and attached the whole to the overcoat, filling the sleeves of the latter with flock, which they took from one of their beds.

"And what about hands," said Gervais.

"Oh, my faith, he will not have any; when one has two heads, one may well be without hands. You, Gervais, will only put on a jacket. Come,

get on your head quickly, and let's get a glance at you."

Gervais placed himself, enveloped his legs in the coat, of which the tails came just down to his belt, where they fastened them with pins, and Jean and Demar exclaimed,—

"It's all right, it is really a freak, we shall make a great deal of money with it."

"Yes, but I can't stand on my head for long at a time."

"Be easy, when there are no curious people you shall get up, you can't always have an audience."

"What about a tent to show our freak in?"

"With four broom handles and seven or eight yards of coarse canvas, I can make one."

The three travellers went to bed delighted with their plans, from which they promised themselves as much pleasure as profit.

The next day after breakfasting and paying for the big head, which they said they wished to purchase for their little sister, they turned toward the neighborhood where they were holding the sale, and bought several yards of linen, which cost more than they had believed it would. Jean said to his comrades,—

"If only we can make our expenses."

"We must charge a good price," said Gervais.

They still had to buy some big posts to sustain the tent, and when their purchases were all made they looked for a place to establish themselves.

"We mustn't put ourselves too much in sight," said Demar, "I believe that permission from the mayor is necessary to show a curiosity."

"If no one can see us, it won't bring us in anything."

"Bah! there is no harm in showing a freak, there's nothing wicked about that. Wait, here is a superb place, we will put up our house here."

The posts were planted, the canvas was cut in several pieces, and then extended about them, finally the tent was finished and it wasn't at all bad. It would hold nearly ten persons without crowding too much. Two big posts placed in the back were to serve as a support for Gervais. There was no light in the interior of the tent but what little penetrated through the canvas; in fact, one could only half see; but the young men had an idea that that would not lessen the curiosity. Gervais was dressed as on the evening before, but as he would not stand on his head for an hour in advance, it was agreed that Demar should not let anybody go to the tent without clapping his hands to warn his comrade to get in position. All being ready, Demar left the tent, passing under the canvas, and armed with a stick he began his duty of attracting the curious, by shouting,—

"Come and see an extraordinary supernatural being, a man having two heads! a head at each end of him. Come in, ladies and gentlemen, this monster is alive, he speaks, and what is more

surprising is the fact that he speaks with the head which is on the ground. Enter; you will not be crowded. It costs only ten sous each, and children under two years only half price."

Some curious persons approached the tent, but nobody entered. Demar shouted very loud, tapping the tent with his stick, but there lacked a picture of the monster, which should have been outside the tent, to strike the eyes of the passers-by, and the latter went off jeering,—

"A fine show, by jingo! they haven't even a little picture at the door."

"It doesn't seem to be taking well," said Jean to Gervais, who was obliged to remain lying on the ground, because his feet were confined to his coat.

"Come in, messieurs; why don't you come in?" cried Demar to some peasants who had stopped to listen to him.

"How much does it cost to see your freak," said one of the two.

"Ten sous each, no more."

"Ten sous, oh get out, we ought to see it cheaper than that; we've seen the monkeys, the serpents and the bears for two sous."

"Yes, but a man with two heads!"

"Why, that can't be finer than a bear."

The peasants departed, and Jean cried through the canvas,—

"Demar, lower your price, you see very well

that nobody will come in. Let them see Gervais for five sous."

Demar perceived some curious people approaching; he delivered the usual speech, and finished by saying,—

"You may see the man with two heads to-day for five sous, because we have so many people; but to-morrow if we have fewer they will pay double, because we must make our expenses and it costs horribly to feed this freak."

An old peasant and his wife approached Demar and seemed willing to enter.

"I have never seen a freak," said the man, "however, I don't wish to die without seeing one, and this one seems as though it must be pleasing."

"A man with two heads, that's a very rare sight, and you say, monsieur, that one is on top and the other below."

"Precisely."

"The one on top is how placed?"

"Like all other heads."

"And that below, how is that placed?"

"Ah, that's the extraordinary thing; come in, and you will see."

"Come in, wife, oh, wait a minute, is your monster vicious?"

"He is as sweet as a lamb, he sings even, when anyone wishes."

"Come on, then; how much is it?"

"Ten sous for you two."

"That's very dear."

"It is no more than is right."

"Do we pay before seeing it?"

"Oh, yes, that's the custom."

"Well, then, my man, what do you say about it?"

"Why, I want to see it. It will amuse us, and I shall have something to talk about when I get home."

The old peasant gave ten sous to Demar, saying,—

"But where do you get in? I don't see a door."

"Underneath, you have to lift the canvas a bit, but wait until I give the signal, for our freak may perhaps be asleep; and then you will see nothing, for when he sleeps he hides his heads under his shoulders like the canaries."

Demar clapped his hands, immediately Jean made Gervais stand on his head, and saw that the pasteboard head was firmly fixed. At this moment the peasant and his wife entered beneath the canvas, and rubbed their eyes that they might see clearly.

"Oh, mercy! where are we now?" said the woman, "I can hardly see."

"See, gentlemen and ladies, here is the man with two heads," said Jean, placing himself between the audience and Gervais.

"Wait, wife, wait, here's the freak."

"Oh, heavens, husband, how ugly the head on top is. How he has his eyes fixed."

"Look at the one below," said Jean, "that is the prettiest, and it is that he moves in preference."

"Monsieur, make him speak to us a bit, if you please."

"Speak," said Jean, striking Gervais on the chest.

"I am stifling," murmured the latter, who was commencing to turn purple.

"What is it that he says?"

"He says that you are a very fine woman."

"Why, he is not so stupid after all," said the woman.

"They told us that he could sing," said the peasant, "make him sing a little song for us."

"Will you sing?" said Jean, lowering himself towards Gervais, and the latter answered,—

"No, hang it, I want to get up; I can't do it any longer."

"Get away as quickly as you can," said Jean to the old peasant and his wife, "he has just told me that he has a great desire to eat you."

"Oh, my God, let us escape, husband."

And the two country people threw themselves on the ground to pass underneath the canvas, while Jean pushed them from behind to accelerate their departure, because Gervais had quitted his perpendicular position. The old peasant and his wife left the tent on all fours, the woman had her

bonnet on crooked, the husband's face was contorted. Demar, who was then surrounded by young country people, helped the husband and wife to pick themselves up, saying to them,—

"Wasn't it curious? you don't regret your money, do you?"

"Ah, yes," said the countrywoman, "your show's very pleasing, but your freak, which you said was gentle as a lamb, has given us a famous fright."

"It's curious," said the husband, "oh, yes, it's curious; but I wouldn't go back there for any amount of money."

"Why not?"

"Why not? hang it, ask the showman what your man with two heads wanted to do to us; if we hadn't got away hotfoot he would have eaten us, that's all."

Demar tried to restrain his laughter as he answered,—

"That's very singular, it must have been one of his bad moments; but he very rarely has them."

"Come along, husband, I am not easy near that tent," said the countrywoman, taking her husband's arm; and the old couple went off, saying,—

"By jingo, we can boast of having been properly frightened for our ten sous."

The country people who had stopped in front of the tent had understood a part of what was said by those who had seen Gervais, and that piqued

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"Here is the man with two heads, gentlemen."

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS.

their curiosity. They consulted among themselves as to whether they should go in, but they didn't want to pay five sous. As there were four of them, Demar consented to allow them to enter for twelve sous; they paid, and Demar gave the signal for Gervais to get into position, and the public crawled under the canvas. The villagers, as they picked themselves up, began to grumble at the small amount of light which came through the tent.

"Why haven't you lit up your freak?" said one of them to Jean, "is it because you want to show us cats for tigers?"

Jean made no reply but contented himself with ranging the four villagers as far as possible from Gervais, saying,—

"Here is the man with two heads, gentlemen. Pay great attention to the lower head, that is the cleverest."

The peasants examined Gervais for some moments with a suspicious air, then one of them said to Jean,—

"Why don't your man move either the eyes or the mouth of his head that's on top? He doesn't even wink an eyelash."

"He came into the world like that, gentlemen, he has never moved them," answered the amateur showman, "or so he says. I know no further about him."

"Oh, say now, you others, this thing here

looks to me like a fraud," said one of the peasants approaching Gervais.

Jean thought to put him away, saying,—

"Don't go so near him, he is sometimes ugly."

"I believe they have robbed us of our money. That's never been a head, that thing there."

During the colloquy, Gervais, who was tired of standing on his head, said in a low voice,—

"Send them away, Jean, send them away; I can't stay like this any longer."

But the country people were not disposed to go, and while Jean was doing his best to prevent them from touching the pasteboard head, Gervais let himself fall slowly at full length, and in this fall the pasteboard head was detached and rolled with its wig to the peasants' feet.

"Ah, see their deceitfulness, it's a pasteboard head. They are thieves," cried the villagers.

Jean, seeing how things were turning out, slipped underneath the canvas, while the peasants rolled Gervais on the ground, saying to him,—

"Oh, you wicked rascal, you have turned yourself into a freak to get our money; wait, we'll teach you to have two heads."

Gervais did what he could to disentangle his feet from the folds of the coat, but before he had done so, he was well pummelled by the villagers. Gervais wept, shouted; at this moment Jean, who had gone out from under the tent to tell Demar to come to their help, and had not found

him, thought of an expedient to save his comrade; he pulled up the posts which supported the tent and it fell on the peasants. While they were seeking to extricate themselves from the canvas, Jean, seeing Gervais' head, drew him by the shoulders, helped him to get out, and escaped with him into the fields.

CHAPTER VIII

Another of Demar's Tricks. The Farm Laborer's Family

One runs fast at the age when prisoner's base, football and paper kites are most agreeable recreations, and the fleet young limbs of our friends, Jean and Gervais, had carried them well out of Coulommiers before the awkward peasants had managed to disengage themselves from the folds of the canvas tent.

Jean wished to stop, but Gervais still kept on running, fear had given him wings. As the two breathless, panting boys emerged from a little lane, they perceived some one who was running on the road at some distance in front of them.

"Jingo! I believe that's one of the fellows who were beating me so unmercifully," said Gervais, with a shudder.

"Oh, no," said Jean, "don't be alarmed, we were out of sight before they picked themselves up. I am quite certain that's Demar, I recognize him."

It was indeed Demar, who at the first sound which he had heard within the tent had judged it prudent to depart without waiting for his compan-

ions. The young people, when they had rejoined him, stopped at length behind some bushes to regain their breath.

"Here you are then," said Jean to Demar, "you left us in trouble without being at all uneasy as to the way we were to get out of it."

"You ought to have known how to play your parts better."

"It was Gervais, he couldn't stand on his head any longer."

"How do you suppose any one can stand for so long on his head; and it's pretty hard to be flogged afterwards for getting on one's feet; you won't catch me acting the freak again."

"By the way, let's see the receipts; how much have we made."

"Twenty-two sous in all."

"That's jolly, that is! Why, we paid that out for the wig which we put on the big head."

"Didn't I tell you we shouldn't make our expenses—and then there's the canvas tent, we had to leave that in the peasants' hands."

"That's your fault, Jean, it was your idea that we should show a curiosity."

"By jingo, fellows, one can't be successful always; another time we'll do better."

"Yes, but don't count on me to be the freak," said Gervais, rubbing his back.

"Come, let's go on again, I don't care to stay so near the scene of our exploits."

The young travellers resumed their walk, and did not stop until they were in the little village of Boissy-le-Chatel, which they perceived at a distance before them. After they had rested for some little time they judged it prudent to depart still farther from Coulommiers. They no longer played by the way, for Gervais appeared to be in pain, Demar was reflective, and Jean said to himself,—

"Oh, how much better off I was with my parents! My father had shut me up, it is true, but really, I well deserved to be punished for getting tipsy; and I am sure my mother would not have left me long on bread and water."

They arrived at the little town of Rebais. It was no longer a matter of looking for the best tailor. The enterprise of the morning had still further lightened their purse; Jean did not possess more than twenty francs; and he said in a firm tone that that would have to last them for a fortnight. Demar laughed in his face, and Gervais said,—

"In that case we can't eat any more partridges."

The young men went into a poor inn, where they supped off an omelette and some cheese and where they later went to bed in a garret where a bad bed had been provided for the three of them. They passed the night disputing instead of sleeping, because misfortune always puts one in a bad temper, especially if one deserves it.

The next day Jean paid the expenses; but de-

spite their economy the bill amounted to seven francs, including their bed.

"With all our economy in dining so badly, the twenty francs will not go far," said Jean to his companions.

"Then we might as well have dined well," said Gervais.

Demar said nothing. He was looking at a traveller who was coming into the house, and who held in his hand a big valise which he placed on a table at which he seated himself. The traveller's face expressed confidence and good-humor; he had hardly come in before he entered into conversation with those who were near him, telling all his affairs.

"Let us get out of this," said Jean, "what are we doing here?"

"Jingo! I'm tired," said Demar, "and there's no hurry. Stay a little longer, I hope it'll be worth our while."

"What do you mean?"

But Demar said nothing further. He extended himself upon a bench and began to smoke a pipe. Jean and Gervais went to walk in a little garden that was behind the house. Some tables placed under the trees denoted that travellers might take their refreshments there. They had been for a quarter of an hour in the garden when Demar came to join them. His face wore a singular expression, he threw frequent glances behind him and seemed very much agitated.

"What the devil have you been doing?" said Jean, who was struck with Demar's uneasiness.

"A good trick," answered Demar, in a low voice, and still looking behind him.

"What is it? what is it, then?"

"Hush! speak low; oh, I haven't lost any time, I tell you. I've played a good trick on that idiot of a traveller we saw. I thought they would have a gate at the bottom of the garden by which we could leave, but I don't see any there."

"Well, let us go out through the house. Come along."

"No, no, wait," said Demar, stopping Jean, who was about to return to the house. "I don't want to go through there. If that idiot has perceived — however, he was breakfasting, and I hope — "

"What have you been doing, what are you trembling about? Speak."

"Rejoice, we are in funds, we are going to amuse ourselves again and for a long time. Wait, do you see this pocket-book?"

"Oh, my God!" cried Jean, struck with a sudden idea, "This pocket-book, whose is it?"

"It belonged to that traveller who was talking to everybody. After you left I went up to him, he offered me something to drink, I accepted, and then we chatted. The idiot wanted to open his valise to show me some purchases he was taking to his wife. He told me that he had received

a thousand crowns at Coulommiers, then he drew out his pocket-book to look for an address there. After he had closed it again, he thought he had put it in his pocket, but he let it fall under the bench. I immediately put my foot over it, then I admired the articles which were in the valise in order to distract his attention. At length I picked up the pocket-book without his noticing it, and saying good-by to him I left the table."

"You wretch; that is a theft, that's stealing," said Jean, looking at Demar, indignantly.

"No, it isn't stealing; why the idiot let his pocket-book fall."

"You saw it fall, and should have given it back to him."

"Oh, indeed, as to that, I am not quite so stupid. What do you say, Gervais?"

"Why, hang it," answered Gervais, "the fact is since the pocket-book was on the ground, it seems to me that one might pick it up, and —"

"You must return it, Demar. I tell you if you keep that you will be a dishonest man, and you will get yourself into trouble. Do you call that a joke? to take a pocket-book from a traveller?"

"I didn't take it from him, I only picked it up."

"You must take back that pocket-book; if that man perceives his loss, if they find it on you, my God! they'll arrest us as thieves."

"Pshaw, pshaw, you always see the blackest side of everything. I shall give nothing back."

"Well, then, I'm going! Good heavens, it is too late! Look! look! they are coming to arrest us."

Demar and Gervais turned, and through the trees they perceived three gendarmes, who had paused at the entrance to a pathway, looking around them as though they were searching for something.

The Medusa's head seemed to have petrified Demar. He became ghastly pale, and remained motionless, incapable of taking a step. By a movement which was habitual to him whenever he was frightened, Gervais slipped immediately under a table that was near him, but Jean who trembled at the idea of being arrested as the accomplice of a thief, when his conscience told him he had done nothing wrong, quickly left his companions, gained the end of the garden and, without realizing what they might think of him, without calculating the consequences of his action, he climbed over a wall which was only four feet high, and jumped into the fields, where he took to his heels and ran for nearly a league without stopping, and without looking behind him.

Unable to run longer Jean at length stopped and looked around him. To the left was a highway, behind and in front of him some fields, and on the right a little wood. He listened, every-

thing was quiet, some laborers who were working on the land, some countrywomen who were picking herbs, alone enlivened the scene; nothing indicated that he was being pursued, but the noise of a cart or of a spade made him tremble. He believed that he recognized the steps of the gendarmes who were running after him, he trembled although he was innocent. What would he have done had he been guilty?

Jean reached the little wood on his right and there seated himself at the foot of a clump of trees. He reflected on what Demar had done, and also reflected, "I did well to leave them. Demar is a thief, and I don't want to be the friend of a thief. Gervais is not much better than he, because he advised him to keep the pocket-book. No doubt they have been arrested by now, those gendarmes will have taken them. What if they should say it was me who advised them to rob that traveller? Demar is quite capable of it, and perhaps they are looking for me to arrest me also, and if I should say that I wished they should restore the money they would not believe me. Oh, my God! what will they say among my relatives if I am brought to Paris as a thief? Oh, how sorry I am that I was friendly with Demar and Gervais. My father said truly that they were worthless fellows; he was right, he knew them better than me, although I saw them more often than he did."

While musing thus Jean extended himself on the grass, little by little fatigue relaxed his limbs, his eyes closed, he slept soundly.

It was night when Jean awoke, he had slept for a long time in the wood; he rubbed his eyes, but could not distinguish anything around him. He knew not where he was. At length, in groping about he touched the trees which had sheltered his slumbers, and then recalled the events of the previous day. He felt also that he had eaten nothing since morning, and he arose, saying to himself,—

"I must get on my way again, for I shall not find a supper by remaining in the woods."

He was entirely ignorant as to his whereabouts, and did not even remember by which side he had entered the woods, nor how he could leave them. But Jean was not a coward, the darkness, the solitary place in which he found himself caused him not the least fear; he feared only the shame of being arrested as the accomplice of a thief, and this idea rendered him fearful of returning unconsciously into the neighborhood from whence he had fled in the morning. However, he did not wish to pass the night in the wood; a seventeen-year-old stomach cannot accustom itself to one meal in twelve hours. Jean decided to walk at haphazard, it was essential that he should get out of the wood, which did not appear to him to be of any great size. He groped on, holding his hands

before him to push aside the branches which opposed his steps, and went towards a place where the wood was more open, hoping to discover a path which would lead him to a highway.

After walking for some time he found a beaten track, he followed it, and had not taken two hundred steps when he saw a light. A feeling of pleasure made his heart beat more quickly, he doubled his pace and went towards the light, and soon found himself on the border of the wood, and in front of a little cottage the window of which looked on the path he had just traversed. Jean paused before the dwelling.

"That was a good stroke," said he, "this is a peasant's house; they will not refuse me a supper and a bed, if I pay them for it, and I still have thirteen francs about me. I would much rather sleep here than in the village, for it is quieter and I shall not be afraid of meeting those gendarmes who upset me so this morning. I must knock."

Jean found the door of the cottage and knocked lightly. Soon he heard steps and an infantile voice cried, "Is it you, Jean?" The young traveller experienced a feeling of surprise and indefinable uneasiness on hearing himself thus addressed at night, and in an unknown place, by the inhabitants of this cottage. However, the voice was so sweet that, yielding to a natural impulse, he answered almost immediately, "Yes, it's me." Somebody opened the door, a little boy of seven or

eight years, with a gentle, innocent face, appeared on the doorsill, and on seeing the young traveller, exclaimed, "Ah, it is not Jean." However, our traveller had advanced a few steps and found himself at the entrance to a poorly furnished room, in which a countryman of some fifty years was seated near a table, with one of his legs resting on a footstool.

"Who is it, then?" asked he, glancing toward the door.

"Sir," said Jean advancing, "I have lost myself in the wood. I don't know the country, and I was looking for a house that I might ask my way and get some supper if I could, for I am very hungry; but I shall pay for it, monsieur; oh, I have enough to pay for it."

The countryman smiled, and as he looked at Jean, the lad's frank and youthful face inspired him with interest.

"Even if you have not anything to pay with," said he, "do you think I would refuse you a mouthful of bread? No, that is not my custom. I'm not rich, it's true, but a trifle like that doesn't prevent one from being willing to oblige."

"No, we're not rich," said the boy, "above all, since our white cow is dead."

"Hold your tongue, Jacques. Come in, come in, young man, and sit down and rest yourself. I will give you some of what I have now, but presently we shall have some more provisions. I

am waiting for my eldest son, who will bring them as he comes home from his day's work. I thought it was him when you knocked."

"He is named Jean, then?"

"Yes."

"And so am I, monsieur."

"Ah, you are named like my son. One reason the more why you should sup with us."

Jean seated himself near the table, and little Jacques placed before him some brown bread and some cheese, looking at him curiously all the while, As Jean ate the food with appetite, the countryman questioned him.

"Are you going far from here, young man?"

"I'm going to Paris, monsieur."

"About thirteen leagues. And you are going from your father's house?"

"No, on the contrary, I am going back there."

"Oh, you have been to see some of your relations, then?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"At Rebais, perhaps."

"No," exclaimed Jean quickly, "I haven't been in that town. Is it far from here, monsieur?"

"No, three-quarters of a league or so."

"Oh, my God!" said Jean to himself, "am I no farther than that from it?"

"Is it long since you left your father?" resumed the countryman.

"Why, it will soon be two months."

"You must be impatient to see him again. Two months far from one's parents is a long while; I am sure that they will expect you every day."

Jean lowered his eyes, and answered stammering,—

"Yes, yes, they are expecting me."

"Papa,' said the little boy, running to his father, "I shall never leave you, shall I?"

"No, my boy, you will be like your brother Jean, you will always live with me. You are your father's supporters."

"I am not big enough yet to work in the fields, but soon I shall be able to do the cooking, and you'll see what good soup I'll make. Since your leg is so bad you must not get up."

The countryman kissed his son, and Jean put the bread he was eating back on the table, his heart was too full for him to feel any appetite.

"Why, how is that? you are not eating," said the countryman. "Hang it! 'tis not very delicate, but you shall sup presently with us. Ah, there is someone knocking now, it is my son, no doubt."

The little boy ran to open the door and exclaimed joyfully,—

"Yes, it's my brother Jean."

A young man of eighteen, strong, well-built, but browned by the sun, came into the cottage, holding in one hand the instruments of his labor

and in the other a basket. He ran to kiss his father, and drawing from his jacket a five-franc piece and some small change he put it all in the old man's hand, saying to him,—

"Here is what I have earned in five days. They paid me, but as the boss is pleased with me, he has promised to increase my day's pay."

"Why, how is this, you are keeping nothing, Jean," said the countryman.

"What need have I of money, since I eat with you in the evening and carry enough in the morning to last me all day. I wish I could earn a good deal more, and it should all be for you, father."

"Yes, and then we could soon get another cow," said little Jacques.

"Come, let us go to supper, my children. Wait, my son, here is a traveller who will sup with us, he is returning to Paris to his parents."

"Oh, yes, monsieur," said Jean, heaving a deep sigh, "and I wish that I was already with them, but thirteen leagues is nothing, and I shall make them tomorrow during the day."

They put on the table the provisions the young laborer had brought. The father placed himself between his two sons, and Jean was much moved at seeing the friendship which existed between the countryman and his two children. While eating, the elder son said,—

"I passed through Rebais today, and I witnessed the arrest of a rascal there."

Jean trembled, he felt sure that this was one of his companions.

"What had the rascal been doing?"

"It seems that he had been amusing himself by setting fire to the farms."

"The wretch!"

"But he had been pursued, and the gendarmes arrested him at Rebais; I saw them lead him away."

"You saw him," said Jean, "what did he look like?"

"Why, he was a man who must have been forty years of age, with a very bad face, and —"

"And did they arrest him alone?"

"Yes, it seemed that he had no accomplices."

Jean breathed more freely, it would have been painful to think that one of his old companions was in the hands of justice.

"If you wish to sleep here," said the father of the family, "you will have rather a hard bed, but hang it, you'll share my children's couch. I was in easier circumstances formerly, but many misfortunes came upon me; first, I lost my wife, my good Marie; then I became paralyzed in this leg, which prevents me from working; and finally, our cow, which had been a great resource for us, died. But I cannot complain since my sons remain to me, and you see how they love me; they will never leave their father, will you, my children?"

"Oh, never, never," said the laborer's two sons at the same moment enfolding him in their arms, "is it not our duty and pleasure to remain with you?"

"And who would take care of you," said little Jacques, "when you can hardly walk, if we should leave you all alone. It would be very pretty if any one except us should have to give his arm to our father."

Tears rose in the countryman's eyes, he kissed his two sons tenderly, and Jean did not seek to keep back the tears which this scene, and the remembrance of how he had treated his own parents, wrung from him. But rest was needful, the inhabitants of the cottage threw themselves on their beds. Jean shared that of the elder son of the laborer, but slumber did not come to close his eyelids. Too many thoughts agitated his heart and his mind. He reproached himself for his flight, he thought of the sorrow which his parents must have experienced at the manner in which he had repaid their love, their indulgence for him. What a difference between his conduct and that of the farm laborer's children, between the sentiments of these peasants and those of his former comrades, all these reflections agitated him, made him uneasy, but as he looked at the young man beside him, he said,—

"I will return to my mother, and then I will sleep as peacefully as he does."

Day appeared at length. The inhabitants of the cottage were early risers, they breakfasted, the elder son took his mattock and spade and went to his work. Jean asked the way to Paris. Before leaving, he wished to give all that he possessed to the master of the cottage, but the latter would consent to receive but a very small sum. He ordered little Jacques to put Jean on the way which he must take to go to Paris, and when he arrived at the place where he had no further need of a guide, Jean put his money into Jacques' hand, saying,—

"Give that to your father; that will help you to get another cow. I shall not need it, for this evening I shall be at my parents' house; at least, I shall have done something beside foolishness with my mother's money."

The little boy took what was given him, jumping with joy, and returned to the cottage, exclaiming as he ran,—

"We shall have a cow, it's to get a cow."

Jean, better pleased with himself than he was the evening before, set gayly out, asking from time to time the road to Paris. At length, assuring himself that he was following the right road, he walked for six leagues without stopping, and then ate in an inn a meal which cost him the ten sous he had kept for his journey. He had still almost seven leagues to make, but he had courage and good legs. Still, it was all he could do to get

to Paris; but he arrived there at length. It had long been night when Jean found himself in the Rue Saint-Paul. He experienced an uneasiness and embarrassment which redoubled as he approached his parents' dwelling, and he paused, saying,—

"What if they should give me an unkind reception, if they should send me away?" Then he thought of his godfather Bellequeue, who had always been the mediator between himself and his father, and whose extreme indulgence he had tested. "I will go to him first," said he, "he will forgive me, he will warn my mother and appease my father's anger."

Delighted by this idea, Jean ran and knocked at the house where his godfather lived.

CHAPTER IX

Jean Returns to the Paternal House and Becomes a Man

Our good old friend Bellequeue, since he had quitted the fine arts — for as my readers must be aware, there are now artists in everything — had taken a pretty apartment and a little maid of eigh teen years to look after his household, cook his meals, and attend to his comfort generally (with which arrangement, for some mystic reason, Madame Durand did not appear entirely satisfied). For M. Bellequeue had remained a bachelor, and although he always advised his friends to marry, he, like a good many other people, had not thought fit himself to follow the advice which he so freely gave.

The gallant hairdresser, while walking on the tips of his toes and doing the amiable to the ladies, had amassed enough money to afford him an income of a thousand crowns; and upon that modest sum a quiet bachelor can live very well even when he has a young maid to take charge of his household. Bellequeue, who was approaching his fifty-third year, was well preserved; his color had become a little deeper, especially on the nose, but

he still had white teeth and marvellous lips. His hair was scrupulously cared for, nor had he changed his style of dressing it, and nothing served him but superfine pomade and perfumed powder; finally, he dressed with extreme propriety, and his three-cornered hat was as shining as his shoes brushed with English blacking. Bellequeue could still play the gallant without appearing ridiculous; but if he courted the ladies of the Saint-Antoine quarter he was none the less correct in his conduct, and never went home later than eleven o'clock. And one may be assured, besides, that the little maid permitted herself to scold when he was irregular.

This young maid, who called herself Rose, was a rather piquant brunette; her eyes were small but extremely vivacious, and her nose, which the neighbors called a pug but which her master averred to be like Roxalana's, gave a rather comical expression to her face, which was already sufficiently pert. Mademoiselle Rose dressed rather like a chambermaid than a general servant. She had pretty trimmed caps and silk aprons, her waist was compressed into a straight corset, and she wore a little bustle very gracefully; finally, the evil tongues of the neighborhood, scandalized by the style and the toilets of Mademoiselle Rose, was assured that she had come into M. Bellequeue's house as more than a maid, and that she had so advertised. They had joked the old

bachelor, they had even gone so far as to say that a man who observed the proprieties should not take a maid of eighteen years who was so coquettish as Mademoiselle Rose. Bellequeue had not listened to these slanderers, he thought that in the autumn of life a man should be able to do as he wished; that he could maintain the proprieties with a maid of eighteen as well as with a housekeeper of fifty; that it was more agreeable on going home in the evening to find a pretty rather than an old face, and then a well-dressed servant did honor to her master; finally, that he took a maid for himself and not for his neighbors. In short, he had kept the young girl, and he had done well.

Bellequeue had just come home. He had taken off his brown coat, put on his dressing-gown, and begun a game of draughts with Rose, a game at which the young maid was still a novice, and she never could understand how a queen that was covered could be taken, but her master had patience and explained to her all the moves; he was going to take a queen when the bell rang violently.

"Oh, heavens, who is ringing like that?" said Mademoiselle Rose.

"He is certainly rather unceremonious," said Bellequeue, "go and see, Rose. Ah, you must notice that I was going to take a queen, we will resume the game."

"I should like to settle these ringers," said

Mademoiselle Rose, going to open the door, ill-humoredly.

But Rose had not time to scold, hardly had she opened the door when Jean entered brusquely, and overturning a chair and a table which he found in his way, he rushed into Bellequeue's room and flung his arms around that worthy's neck before the latter had time to recognize him.

"It's me, godfather!" cried Jean.

"Good God! it is he, it is you, my dear Jean. You worthless fellow, you don't deserve that I should kiss you. But here you are come back. I always said that he would come back; in truth, I said also that I should go and find him, but I did not find him. But here you are! the prodigal son has come back, we are going to kill the fatted calf! kiss me again, my boy."

Bellequeue pressed his godson again in his arms, and Mademoiselle Rose looked at Jean complacently, because during the year that she had been with Bellequeue she had seen him quite often. However, Jean, who was worn out with fatigue, disengaged himself from his godfather's arms, and threw himself in a chair, saying,—

"Oh, I am all worn out."

"In fact, you appear to be very tired, my boy, and—"

"How dusty M. Jean is," said Rose.

"Have you come a great distance then?"

"I have made thirteen leagues today."

"Thirteen leagues, good heavens! that is almost a miracle, but not always on your tiptoes, I hope."

"I have run almost all the way."

"Poor boy, how he has grown, how strong he is now. Is he not, Rose?"

"Certainly, M. Jean is a man now."

"But you must need to take something."

"I should think so, I am dying of hunger and thirst."

"And you said nothing,— Rose, go quickly, bring everything that was left from dinner. I will go myself. Wait, you shall have some of my old wine, I have a bottle of it here."

Mademoiselle Rose ran on one side, Bellequeue on the other, in an instant the table was laid, and loaded with cold meats, fruits and bottles. Bellequeue wished himself to pour for his godson; he sat down at the table and touched glasses with him.

"To your health, Jean! to your happy return."

"Thank you, godfather; but tell me about my parents, my mother. They have been very angry with me, have they not? I see very well now that I have done wrong, but in order for me to be convinced of it it was necessary for me to act foolishly. My friends were very worthless fellows, I know it now; but then, I did not believe it."

"From the moment that you confess the wrong that you have done, that shall be the end of it,"

said Bellequeue. "Let us drink to the forgetfulness of your fault."

"Yes, godfather."

"Take care, monsieur," said Rose, pulling her master by the tail of his coat, "you will make yourself ill; remember, that you have already dined."

"Yes, Rose, be easy, I shall be moderate; but I am so pleased to see this dear Jean again. Oh, you have done wrong, very wrong, my boy — you have grown two inches, I believe. If at least, before going, you had told some one about it — how travelling forms young men, eh, Rose! he doesn't look at all like a child now, does he?"

"And my mother, is she well?" said Jean.

"Very well, my dear, and how pleased she will be, how she will kiss you. We spoke of you every day."

"And my father, do you think that he will scold me much? You will see him first, won't you? and you will speak to him for me?"

Bellequeue did not answer, he exchanged glances with Rose, and his brow became gloomy.

"You don't answer me," said Jean, "is it because you think that my father will not receive me? that he will not forgive me?"

"It is not that, my dear," said Bellequeue, with embarrassment. "But I did not think that you would be ignorant — since your departure — many things have happened — do you know it is two months tomorrow since you left?"

"Well, and what has happened?"

"My boy, in this world one must expect everything. It is a maxim by which one should be guided, to be astonished at nothing."

"But my father, what has happened to him, then?"

"He died a month ago."

"He is dead — O my God! and perhaps I was the cause of it."

"No, oh, no, my boy; calm yourself. Your father loved you much, but he took your absence much more philosophically than your mother. He said every day, 'My son will be unfortunate, he will have nothing to eat, that will do him good, that will correct him, and I hope that he will come back more docile,' but a month ago an apoplectic stroke carried him off in an instant, although he drank something every morning to prevent such an accident."

"Oh, I shall never forgive myself for not having been with him in his last moments. This is the punishment for my wickedness; but it is very cruel."

"Come, Jean, calm yourself! It is very well to weep for your father; you should do that, should he not, Rose? why now, you are crying too, Rose."

"Yes, monsieur, I am so sorry to see M. Jean cry."

"I can understand that; if I allowed myself to go, I should weep also. But I wish to preserve

my firmness; it concerns me now to go and reassure Madame Durand, and to bring her son back to her."

"Yes, you are right, godfather; let us go and find my mother."

Bellequeue put on his coat and left with Jean, who did not wish to delay going to console his mother. They soon arrived at Madame Durand's. The shop was shut, for it was already late, but Catherine came to open it. She uttered an exclamation of joy on seeing her young master, and although they asked her to be silent she ran to her mistress, saying,—

"Here he is, madame. M. Jean is come back, M. Bellequeue has brought him."

Seeing that he could not make Catherine hold her tongue, Jean ran up as quickly as she did, and he was soon in his mother's arms. She kissed him very tenderly.

"Here he is," said Bellequeue; "I always told you that I would bring him back. He is changed; oh, he will be good now, he has promised me."

Madame Durand did not need this assurance in order to forgive her son; but Jean, informing her of the grief which he experienced at the death of his father, did not hide the reproaches with which he overwhelmed himself. Finally, when the first moments given to tenderness and surprise had passed, they begged the fugitive to relate his adventures, and although it was late M. Bellequeue

waited to hear his narrative. Jean told everything up to Demar's last trick, which had determined him to leave his companions, but a feeling of friendship for his former comrades led him to hide a fault which if it were known would cover their parents with shame.

"We have quarrelled," said he, "and I left them. For a long time, besides, I had felt that I should come back to you."

They asked nothing further of Jean; they believed him, they kissed him again, and having thus reinstalled his godson with his mother, Bellequeue returned home delighted with his evening.

The next day, early in the morning, Jean went alone to his father's tomb, and his mother, when she saw him come in, kissed him, as she murmured to herself,—

"I knew well that he was not a bad boy."

All the family were presently informed of young Durand's return; but nobody came to felicitate his mother, because all the relations having blamed her extreme indulgence, Madame Durand was annoyed with them.

"He will soon commit some new escapade," said the Renards.

"He will never know a trade," said Fourrier.

"He will never be amiable with the young ladies," said the cousin Aglae.

"He will never dance well," said M. Mistigris.

Madame Durand gave herself very little uneasi-

ness about what the relations said; her son had come back, that was all she desired. Madame Moka came to see the heedless young fellow, for in his absence she had often come to keep Madame Durand company, accepting a glass of brandy while the mamma talked about her son, and assuring her as she sipped the liquor,—

"He will come back, madame, I am sure of it."

As to Madame Ledoux, she was anxious to see Jean again to ascertain if he resembled one of her three husbands or one of her fourteen children.

In the early days of his return Jean was quiet and remained near his mother. Good Madame Durand was even alarmed at the extreme virtue of her son, she feared that he was about to become ill, and was the first to advise him to give himself a little distraction. For his part, Jean besought his mother to give up the business and take the rest which she had well earned, and as her son had decided not to be an herbalist, Madame Durand consented to sell her property. Thanks to the care and efforts of Bellequeue, who charged himself with this negotiation, the stock was well sold. The herbalist had done a good business and been very economical, and a year after the death of her husband Madame Durand retired from business with six thousand livres income. Jean had almost as much from what his godmother had left him, and Madame Durand said to everybody,—

"My son will some day have twelve thousand livres income; with that, his face and his talents, he can marry a duchess."

Jean, who was almost eighteen years old, was, in fact, a very handsome boy, but if his figure was well-built, his carriage was not at all distinguished. Used to frequent smoking-rooms, to prefer tea-gardens to drawing-rooms, and the society of a grisette to that of a woman of the world, Jean had very bad manners and tone. He was not vulgar, but he was brusque; he did not know how to pay polite little attentions or to address a compliment to a woman, and he often mingled energetic swearings in his conversation. Finally, not wishing to do anything to render himself pleasing, Jean said, "They must take me as I am," and his mother answered him, "You are very well as you are, my boy."

Jean did not seek to please and detested coxcombs, not understanding how any one could remain for an instant before a looking-glass. Bellequeue sometimes said to him,—

"My dear, one can dress properly without being a fop. There is nothing wrong in having taste, in dressing one's hair carefully; and it is not being a coxcomb to insist that one's coat shall be well made and one's pantaloons well pressed."

"Pshaw," answered Jean, "provided that a man is decent, isn't that enough?"

Finally, Jean, who knew nothing of literature,

of music, or of painting, who had no pleasing talents and no useful knowledge, said again,—

"When one has twelve thousand livres income, is there any need of his knowing all those things?"

And good Madame Durand answered him,—

"No, certainly, my dear Jean, you have enough wit to talk without having learned anything."

On the other hand Jean was very strong at billiards, and passed a part of his day playing them. He drank hard without making himself tipsy, and often went to restaurants to vie in drinking with the young men of his age; sometimes he led Bellequeue with him, and made him smoke a pipe or cigar. He did not care much for the play, because he was obliged to remain too long in the same place; he did not know how to pay court to a lady, but he loved to laugh with a grisette, with whom one is immediately on unceremonious terms. While going to dine or to walk with his godson, Bellequeue tried to render him gallant.

"You have a pretty voice, my dear," said he, "but you do not use it well; you only know how to sing drinking songs, and you sing them roughly. You don't carry your hat well, your cravat is always tied negligently; you hold yourself straight, but you don't walk gracefully."

"I like to be free, godfather, that's all I care for," said Jean.

"No doubt it is very agreeable to do only one's will," said Bellequeue, "but that need not prevent

one from doing his hair properly, and one is as free in singing pretty things, little sentimental airs, as in shouting drinking songs which make the glasses shake."

"Pshaw, my dear godfather, what an air it gives one to sing those romances which make everybody who listens to them go to sleep and look sentimental and make languid eyes."

"My dear, that is not displeasing to the ladies."

"I am sorry for it; but I shall never know how to do all that. I must please naturally, or never please at all; it is all the same to me."

"If you were in love you would not say that."

"In love, oh, I assure you that would not make me do anything stupid; besides, I have already been in love three or four times. Do you think because of that I would heave big sighs and make fine compliments? No, when it suits me, I say immediately to the person, 'Do you know that you are confoundedly pretty, on the faith of an honest man, you please me very much.' If one of them escapes, I don't run after her; another laughs, and that is because I please her, and then we are soon in accord."

"My dear, it is because you always pay your homage to little workwomen, to grisettes."

"And aren't these women just like others?"

"Well, no. That is to say, they are women who are not exigeant that one should court them assiduously,"

"Oh, if they were exacting about anything, that wouldn't please me."

"And you believe that you have been in love, my dear Jean."

"Why, it seems to me that I have."

"Not at all, that is not so."

"Let it be what it will, I can't do the amiable any differently."

Bellequeue, on going home, said to Rose,—

"Jean is a handsome boy, brave, honest, well-made; it is a pity that he does not try to soften a little the roughness of his clothes and manners; then he would be lacking in nothing. If he would only take me for a model in the manner of bowing to a lady or offering his arm."

"M. Jean is very well as he is," answered Rose, "his frankness excuses his rather abrupt tone, his roughness has nothing disagreeable about it, he is a very handsome boy and has nothing of the fop; that cannot prevent him from pleasing. Ah yes, if he would listen to you, one knows well that he would always be doing some foolish gallantry, hastening to be with all the ladies, that he would always be smiling at one and offering his arm to another."

"Ah, Rose, you go too far; I am polite, I know how to present myself with grace, but that is all."

"I know how you present yourself, monsieur; you know all the women of the neighborhood,

and you bow to them all. There is no harm in Jean remaining as he is."

Bellequeue said nothing more, but he turned away smiling, and looked at himself in the glass, saying,—

"She is becoming terribly jealous."

CHAPTER X

The Little Maid. Bellequeue's Plans

After Jean's return time passed uneventfully enough; he was now over nineteen years of age. Regret at his father's death, which had transpired during his absence on an unworthy escapade, had somewhat sobered him, and he was wary in his choice of acquaintances, and while he was intimate with several young men of his own age, he regarded them as acquaintances rather than as friends. The remembrance of Demar and Gervais had made him fearful of giving his friendship to people who were not worthy of it. In the companions with whom he dined and wined, gamed and followed pleasure in general, he wished to find good, unceremonious, frank fellows like himself; but he wanted them also to be men of honor, incapable of committing a base action.

Therefore he often broke with his acquaintances because, among those people who pass their life in amusing themselves, he naturally often met many who were not delicate as to the means of procuring what would satisfy their desires and who would stop at no meanness to obtain, at the expense of others, what they wished.

However, Jean was even now often the dupe of his good heart. People borrowed money of him, and he did not know how to refuse them, for he loved to oblige, and when they told him the story of some misfortune he emptied his purse into the hands of those whom he believed to be unfortunate; but those who would borrow of him would not return his money, those to whom he recalled their debt did not appear again, and often he would meet at a restaurant or in a café, gulping down champagne or drinking punch, the unfortunate into whose hands he had emptied his purse in the morning. Then Jean would swear at these men and go back to find Bellequeue, to whom he told the tricks that they had played him.

"My dear fellow," Bellequeue would answer, "I have already told you that you jump too quickly at a thing. You act on the first impulse, and in the world it is necessary to yield only to the second or the third, or one risks being often duped by appearances."

"My dear godfather, what do you mean by all your impulses? A man whom I know tells me that he needs money, he asks me for some because he knows that I have it, and I give it to him because I can; it seems to me that is very natural. I have some fortune, surely I can oblige people. If I am taken in by a thief who does not return what I lend him, or a scamp who makes fun of me, how can I possibly help it? But if I meet

the one or the other again I shall begin by thrashing him to teach him not to steal my money."

"Then they will put you in prison for having thrashed a man."

"Must one allow one's self to be robbed, and say nothing about it?"

"No, but one must not yield to the first impulse of anger, one must put his documents into the hands of the sheriff?"

"What do you mean by documents?"

"Why the papers which prove that he owes you something."

"Do you suppose that I have any papers? Do you think that when I lend five hundred francs to an acquaintance, I say to him, 'Make me a note as quickly as possible, for you may be a thief and not want to pay me.'"

"You see well, my boy, that in the world all these precautions are necessary."

"The world! the world! it is a sorry kind of a world; I should hate to bother myself about it."

"My boy, the bows, the smiles, all that exchange of politeness that one makes daily, does not mean that one esteems, that one considers those whom he so addresses; but it means 'I am as clever as you. I know life, I am accustomed to men, and you cannot get the best of me.'"

"That is to say, one must learn to be as false and as lying as the others. I don't wish for your knowledge of life; I want always to say frankly

all that I think, turn my back on those who bore me, and prove to those who lie to me that I am not deceived by them. Liberty, godfather, is the only thing I care anything about."

"I also am very fond of it, my boy; but in society there are some liberties which one should not allow himself. Some propriety is necessary; for example, if you should see any one with his hair badly dressed you must not laugh in his face, that would be unmannerly. If the desire to laugh overcomes you, and you cannot turn your back, you should bite your lips softly as you smile, and that will give you an agreeable expression which can displease nobody."

"Let me alone, godfather, do you think that I should go to biting my lips because I see a ridiculous person and have the desire to laugh in his face?"

"That is the usage in society, my boy."

"To the devil with your usages. I am very well as I am. My mother finds me so, and that's enough. As for other people, those who don't like my ways had better not say so to me. I am at their service with a sword, a pistol, a stick, or my fist."

"Oh, I know that you are a brave fellow, a determined dog."

"Well, all right, then; let's go and have a smoke, godfather."

Jean, who went to Bellequeue's several times

during the day, did not always find the latter at home, but he found Mademoiselle Rose, who gave him a very kindly welcome; for we know that the brusque and rather free manners of the young man were not displeasing to the little maid. Jean chatted with Rose, who was not stupid, and often while chatting would take her hand, and then her arms, and then her chin, and perhaps put his arm around her waist, and Mademoiselle Rose did not appear to notice it, because Jean did everything with such an air of frankness and good-humor that one could not find it in one's heart to be angry. One morning when Jean did not find his godfather at home he seated himself beside the little maid and said to her,—

"Rose, they assert that I am brusque, unpolished, even; do you find me so?"

"Certainly not, M. Jean; I have always found you very civil, on the contrary. Mercy, you are young, you are lively, but that is very pardonable; besides, I don't like slow people myself. Heavens, they are insupportable!"

"They say also that I swear at every turn."

"Oh, what an untruth! besides, where is the man who doesn't swear sometimes? In moments of excitement, how can they help it? I know some women who acquit themselves at it better than grenadiers; but then, of course, with women it doesn't sound well. Why, the porter's wife opposite when she speaks about her husband always

says, 'That confounded fellow! that jackpudding!'—ah, what a shrew. But a man, one doesn't pay any attention to him."

"They say that they can smell me by my pipe a league away."

"Well, what of that? what harm is there in the smell of a pipe? That only proves that you smoke, that's all; as for me, I like the odor of it."

"My godfather declares that I walk badly."

"Come now, does he want you to walk like him? picking your way, and wriggling like an eel?"

"He says that I am not careful enough in my toilet."

"Is that because you don't pass two hours every morning admiring yourself, as he does? You are very well dressed. I detest fops!"

"He asserts that I haven't the usages of polite society, in which it is necessary to know how to lie, and to put on a pleasant face to those whom one does not like."

"Pretty advice, indeed! They want to spoil your frankness, your natural goodness. Don't listen to him, M. Jean. Aren't you big enough to know how to conduct yourself?"

"And then he says that I don't know how to make love to a woman, that I am not gallant, that I shall never make a conquest."

"Ha, ha, ha! as if you couldn't please without him! It seems to me that you are well enough;

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Jean . . . wished to show her how he made love to the ladies.

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS.

in fact, you are of an age to know how to please women; — and then one learns that of one's self."

Whether it was that Mademoiselle Rose had divined that she was pleasing Jean, or whether it was that the latter wished to show her how he made love to the ladies, the conversation was prolonged for a long time, and they had been there for more than an hour when Bellequeue came home. As he had a key to the door, he did not ring, and came as far as the little drawing-room where Jean was still chatting with the little maid. Bellequeue on this occasion made a grimace which did not resemble a smile. It seemed to him that his godson and the little maid were very close together. However, Jean came cheerfully to meet his godfather, saying,—

"I was waiting for you."

"So I see," said Bellequeue, compressing his lips, "have you been here long?"

"M. Jean has only just arrived," cried Rose.

"Pshaw, quit that; I have been here for more than an hour."

Rose blushed, and this time found that Jean was much too frank and that he was not acquainted with the usages of society.

"And of what were you talking all this time, little Rose?" resumed M. Bellequeue after a moment.

"M. Jean was talking to me of his former travels," said Rose.

"Me, I didn't say one word about that; I was telling you that you were very pleasing, Rose."

"Oh, you were only joking, monsieur."

"No, I meant it; in fact, godfather, I was kissing her when you came in."

"No, monsieur, you were not kissing me."

"Oh, come now, that's too strong. Wait, godfather, this is how I was holding her."

"That's all right," said Bellequeue, putting himself between Jean and Rose, "I can imagine how you were holding her. Rose, go to your kitchen."

Rose left, throwing a glance back at Jean, which implored him to be silent, but to which he paid no attention. Bellequeue tried to assume an imposing air and approached Jean.

"My dear fellow, I have always told you that it is necessary to have some manners, and that there are certain liberties which it is not allowable to take."

"What liberties have I taken now, godfather?"

"I have in my house, as maid, a young girl who is modest and virtuous."

"She is very pleasing."

"Oh, pleasing! that depends upon the taste. She is very coquettish, that is certain."

"And you are not displeased with her for that, since you keep her."

"I didn't say that she pleased me; provided that she does her work well, that is all that I ask;

but I do not wish you to come and kiss her and talk soft nonsense to her."

"Then, if she doesn't please you, what does it matter to you if she pleases me?"

"Because it is necessary to pay some attention to propriety."

"And propriety doesn't prevent you from kissing her all day long, if it pleases you, is that it?"

"I repeat that she is modest and virtuous."

"Well, then, you needn't be afraid that she will listen to me."

"All the same you should not kiss her. It is not suitable."

"It suits me, however, very well."

"My dear Jean, I have already told you that one must not yield to his first impulses."

"My dear godfather, I have already answered you that I mock at the proprieties, and that I never do anything but my own will. Will you come and smoke?"

"No, thank you, I will stay at home."

Jean departed and Bellequeue remained alone. He was reflecting, and did not seem in as good-humor as usual. Rose came into the room, but he said nothing to her. She turned and returned in the room, she coughed, she sang, at length she approached her master, and said in a sweet tone, allowing him to see her teeth, which were very white,—

"Will you play a game of draughts?"

Rose knew her master well. His anger had vanished already. There was something so seductive in the little maid's smile that Bellequeue could not resist it; however, he tried to assume a grave air as he answered,—

"Rose, I am very much displeased with you."

"What for, monsieur?"

"Because you allow Jean to take liberties with you — to be too familiar."

"He has taken none, monsieur. Do you think that M. Jean would think of me? he doesn't think about women at all. Wait, your hair is a little rough, I'll smooth it for you. I know that Jean is a heedless fellow, he laughs, and that is all."

"Am I all right now, Rose?"

"Oh, yes, you are all right now; there is not a hair out of place."

"Despite that, when my godson comes again and I am not in, it is necessary to tell him —"

"I know very well, monsieur, what it is necessary to say to him. But why were you out for such a long time this morning? No doubt you went into the perfumer's?"

"Yes, I went in there for a moment."

"That's just it, I suspected it. When monsieur is there he never knows when to leave."

"Rose, you are pulling my hair, you will make me nervous."

"So much the better, I ought to pull them all out to teach you to be less gallant."

"She is charming, she is a droll little thing," said Bellequeue, placing himself before a draught-board, "but all the same I don't want my godson to be often tête-à-tête with her."

And while moving the draughts Bellequeue reflected as to what he might do that Jean should think no more of Rose, Suddenly an idea struck him, he was delighted, ravished, he arose suddenly and took his hat again, leaving the little maid in the middle of the game.

"Well, what now? are you going to leave me here, monsieur?" said Rose to him.

"Yes, I have some business to talk over with some one."

"You haven't finished the game."

"We will finish it some other time."

"That is very amusing — to stop like that in the middle of things."

"This evening, Rose; this evening I will play four games with you."

So saying, Bellequeue went out and betook himself hastily to Madame Durand's, where he knew well that he should not find Jean.

"My dear neighbor, I have come to talk to you about an important affair," said Bellequeue, seating himself near the herbalist's widow. "A very important affair which will interest you greatly, since it concerns your son."

"My son? Speak, my dear Bellequeue, has anything happened to him?"

"No, no, be easy, he is now smoking or playing billiards, perhaps doing both together. You see there is nothing in that to make you uneasy. But it is Jean's future, Madame Durand; it is his future lot about which I want to talk with you."

"What, does Jean's future make you uneasy? is he not rich? has he not an assured fortune?"

"Yes, if he did not spend to the right and the left, cafés, restaurants, excursions to the country, — all these things cost, you know."

"My son is at an age that craves pleasure, and he must amuse himself."

"You are perfectly right, certainly I do not blame him. But my godson has too good a heart, he is too willing to oblige; he lends to the one and the other, and they never pay him back. When he is at the café he pays for the one who has no money, and that happens very often."

"That proves his feeling."

"It proves also that he doesn't calculate. If one allows one's self to grudge nothing one ends by ruining one's self for people who only laugh at one. Besides, this desultory life is beginning to weary Jean. How many times does he not come to me in the morning and say, yawning, 'I don't know what to do with myself today'?"

"That's true, he yawns very often. I have noticed it, I am sorry to say. Have you invented some game to amuse him, my dear Bellequeue."

"I have invented nothing, but I have found out what is necessary for Jean."

"What is that?"

"Undoubtedly, he must marry."

"He must marry; do you think so?"

"Why not? Jean is twenty years of age, and by his height and manly features he appears twenty-five."

"That is true."

"Some young people are married younger than that. I am certain that it will suit him very well. That will steady him; he will not run so much to the smoking-rooms, to the tea-gardens and public houses. He will not lend his money to everybody, because he will keep it for his children, nor will he yawn so much, because a wife affords the necessary distractions."

The good mamma Durand reflected for some moments, then said at length,—

"I believe that you are right, my dear Bellequeue; in the first place, Jean will make an excellent husband."

"Excellent, that is my opinion."

"Why, then, we must find an excellent wife for him."

"I have the very one that will suit him."

"Really?"

"Just now, while playing draughts with my housekeeper, I was thinking of my dear godson, for you know how much I love him. This idea

of marrying him has appealed to me for a long time, and suddenly I remembered the Chopard family, and I said to myself, this is just what we want, here is the woman for Jean."

"What, the Chopard family."

"Wait a moment, you know M. Chopard, he is a retired distiller; you are acquainted with him, aren't you?"

"A little, M. Durand did not like him."

"Oh, because Chopard is a joker and told M. Durand that it was not necessary to have so much spirit to sell simples as to sell liqueurs; a mere joke; Chopard is very fond of a pun. For the rest, he is a perfectly honest man and his wife is very cheerful, very jolly."

"She is a fat stupid."

"Oh, that doesn't matter, Jean isn't going to marry his wife, but his daughter, Mademoiselle Adelaide. This only daughter, a beautiful woman, well brought up, who at eight years of age was already making eau de noyau, and who will be, they say, an excellent housekeeper and will have sixty thousand francs on her marriage, without counting her future prospects, which are certain, since she is an only daughter and Chopard has at least ten thousand livres income yearly."

"Really, are you sure?"

"Yes; oh, I have known the Chopards for a long time, I dined with them twice a week before I had a housekeeper. Their daughter is nineteen

years of age, but she appears twenty-eight in capability. That's the right age for Jean."

"And do you think that they are thinking of marrying her?"

"Yes, they lately refused a rich wine-merchant because Mademoiselle Chopard did not wish to go and live at Picpus, but I am sure that they will not refuse my godson."

"They must be very difficult to please if they do so. And you say that the young person is pretty."

"Oh, very pretty; a resolute face, Greek features, well-proportioned, a little severe perhaps, but as she grows older her cheeks will fill out. She will be a very fine woman."

"It only remains to know that Jean wishes to marry."

"Oh, I think he does; if he sees that it pleases you, I'll wager that he will consent to it."

"That dear Jean, I shall be so pleased to see him happy and well married."

"He must marry Mademoiselle Chopard, at least, that is, if the young people suit each other; for the young lady's parents would no more constrain their daughter than you would force Jean."

"They are very right, we must first see if the young people suit each other,"

"Yes, and in order to do that, it is necessary that they should see each other. Would you like me to go and invite the Chopards to dine with you?"

"Isn't that going a little fast?"

"When it concerns a marriage, it is necessary to go fast; besides, I will sound the Chopards first, then I can slip in a word as to our designs."

"Unknown to the young lady, I beg of you."

"Oh, that is understood. I should have liked to commence by taking Jean there, but it is the very devil to get him to go into society. Say nothing to him until he has seen the young person."

"No, for he would be capable of going out before the Chopards came."

"After all, a dinner binds one to nothing, and if Mademoiselle Chopard does not please him I have four more to propose to you."

"Arrange everything as you please, my dear Bellequeue, I shall agree with you in everything."

"That being understood, I'll answer to you for it that before long my godson will be married."

Bellequeue, very pleased with the success of his plan, ruminated as he went home,—

"In marrying Jean to Mademoiselle Chopard I am sure that he will not come to my house so often in the morning, and that he will no longer think of talking nonsense to my little maid."

CHAPTER XI

The Chopard Family

Having conscientiously finished his toilet and thoughtfully instructed Rose to go and enjoy a chat with her neighbor — that he might find her in a good-humor on his return — Bellequeue, on the day after his conversation with Madame Durand, went to the Chopard house, which was situated in the Rue du Barry

The Chopards were kindly, good-natured people who possessed little refinement. The husband loved to make his joke, and would laugh for a quarter of an hour at some ancient bon mot which he had already repeated a hundred times, and in which it was difficult sometimes to see the point; his wife began to laugh confidently as soon as he opened his mouth, though it often happened that she had to ask her husband what he had been saying that was so funny. Other people, by the way, also failed sometimes to discover the joke.

Their daughter, Mademoiselle Adelaide, was idolized by her parents, of whom she was the only child. Very different in this respect from Jean, who had not wished to follow his father's occupation, the little Chopard had shown much taste for

distillation; when she was quite a little girl, she had tried preserving cherries and plums in brandy. Her parents, delighted beyond measure, had sent to the exhibition of the products of industry an apricot preserved by their daughter at the age of seven years; but the apricot had not been received.

Mademoiselle Adelaide was rather capricious withal, a little sulky, often exacting, and always wilful; but in her parents' eyes she was a divinity. She had begun to learn music and drawing, but had made no progress in either; later she had taken a fancy to study astronomy, then history, then botany, then chemistry; in short, she had begun a little of everything; and knew nothing except the way to make excellent ratafia. The elder Chopards, however, imagined their daughter to be very learned, and had always yielded to her judgment. Mademoiselle Chopard had attained her nineteenth year. She was tall, well-made, and her face, although rather determined in character, was not disagreeable; her pronounced eyebrows, it is true, gave her rather a forbidding expression, but as she one day would be very rich, many young men had already paid her court. Adelaide was rather difficult to please, being so accustomed to adulation that the compliments of her adorers made very little impression upon her; and when her parents asked her if she would be willing to marry this or that person, she would

answer indifferently, "Oh, no, indeed, they only tell me the same thing as everybody else."

Bellequeue found Monsieur and Madame Chopard together, and that served his plans marvellously well. He spoke of the charming Adelaide. Now to speak to some parents of their only daughter is like getting an author on the subject of his plays, an old soldier on that of his battles, a coquette on that of her conquests, a lover on that of his mistress; they are willing to continue the subject unendingly.

"She is astonishing," said M. Chopard, "she can talk to you just as well of astronomy as of music, of medicine as of liqueurs, nothing phases her. She shows the most astonishing sagacity in the slightest things, M. Bellequeue. Lately, at a party to which we had gone, she played perfectly at vingt-et-un without having learned it."

"That is extraordinary," said Bellequeue.

"And then," resumed M. Chopard, "she has so much spirit that I can't control her, although I am her father, and it is my business to deal with spirits. Hey? Ha, ha, ha! it's good, that. Ha, ha!"

"Ha! ha! M. Chopard, don't make me laugh like that, I beg of you. Of course our daughter has received a superb education; oh, we have spared nothing."

"She has had a dozen masters, and now she is the mistress. Ha, ha! not bad, that, hey?"

While Madame Chopard was laughing at her husband's new witticism, Bellequeue resumed,—

"How does it happen that you have not yet married this charming young lady?"

"Not because lovers are lacking, I can assure you. Adelaide is difficult to please, very difficult. You can imagine that a young person who knows everything does not wish to marry any one but an accomplished man; that is to say, a man who could hold his own with her."

"The devil?" said Bellequeue to himself, "if they want an accomplished, a learned man, I don't believe that Jean will be their meat; all the same, we'll have a try at it yet," and he resumed, slapping M. Chopard's chest,—

"I know some one who will suit your daughter to a T. While he's not precisely a savant, he's a fine fellow, with quite enough wit to hold his own with a woman, a handsome boy of twenty years, an only son, who will have twelve thousand francs income."

"Why, all that sounds very well, indeed—very suitable; and who is the young man?"

"He is the only son of the late Durand, the herbalist of the Rue Saint-Paul."

"The son of poor Durand who was so fond of simples? Why, yes, I have seen him when he was a little boy."

"But they talked about him as if he were a worthless fellow, it seems to me."

"Pure calumny, Madame Chopard. Jean Durand is rather lively, rather heedless, he loves pleasure, but he is of an age to love pleasure; as for the rest, he is as true as my diamond, and as sensitive as a young girl; then, being my godson, I have hardly ever lost sight of him — I can answer for him."

"If he is what you say, the thing might do. Adelaide will see at once if he suits her, she has astonishing insight."

"Has she a knowledge of men also?"

"Of everything, my dear friend."

"You have a very clever daughter."

"I assure you that her husband must be very clever indeed if he can teach her anything."

"Well, now, I don't want to go roundabout in this matter, I am charged by Madame Durand to invite you to come to dinner tomorrow at her house, without ceremony, and to bring mademoiselle with you. We will say nothing to the young people. Let them find out for themselves if they please each other; that's much the better plan. Madame Durand did not care to come herself; but between parents who desire to marry their children there is no need of ceremony. Do you accept?"

"My faith, yes," said M. Chopard, "we will go to dinner. Even if the young people do not suit each other, it is only a dinner accepted, and we will try not to allow it to affect our digestion. Hey? ha, ha, ha, that's good!"

"It is delightful," said Bellequeue, "I will go and tell Madame Durand that she may count on you for tomorrow."

Just as Bellequeue was about to leave, Mademoiselle Adelaide came into the room, holding a little glass jar in her hand. She ran sportively to her father, crying,—

"Papa, papa; look at my plums, it's a new experiment that I have made, to preserve them without sugar. See how firm they are, how green they are!"

"Superb," said M. Chopard, passing the jar to his wife; "Madame Chopard, look at this."

Madame Chopard went into ecstacies over the greengages, and Bellequeue could not but pay his tribute of admiration also.

"Is that of your making, mademoiselle?" said he.

"Yes, monsieur, oh, that is really nothing; I want now to preserve bunches of grapes whole."

"Bunches of grapes," said Chopard, "it is astonishing. She will end by putting everything in brandy."

And the papa added in Bellequeue's ear,—

"My dear fellow, you can imagine that a woman who can put up plums as firm as are those is a treasure in a household."

"A veritable treasure; we will try to steal it from you. Good-by, my dear friends, until tomorrow."

Bellequeue bowed graciously to Mademoiselle Adelaide, and departed to advise Madame Durand of the success of his negotiation. When the retired hairdresser had gone, Mademoiselle Chopard said to her parents,—

"Does M. Bellequeue want to marry me?"

"No, my daughter, no, not he," said Madame Chopard; "but tomorrow you shall see some one —"

"Hush, wife, you must say nothing to her. She must see young Durand without knowing his intentions. We must keep the thing secret or we shall lose our end."

"That's right, M. Chopard, I will say nothing to this dear child; besides, tomorrow we shall see Madame Durand's son, since we are to dine with them. Chance will do the rest."

"Well, now, I wager that M. Durand wants to marry me," said Mademoiselle Adelaide, smiling.

"Why, it's very extraordinary," said Madame Chopard, "we have told her nothing; my word! she guesses everything, it is not our fault."

"She takes after me, Madame Chopard. I guessed everything when I was little, and I said to myself, I must be a distiller since I am a diviner. Hey? ho, ho, ho! very amusing, that. I shall say it again tomorrow at dinner."

For her part, Madame Durand, who was very desirous of knowing the feelings of her son in regard to marriage, awaited Jean's return on the

eve of the day on which the Chopards were expected, and said to him,—

"My dear, have you not sometimes had a desire to settle yourself?"

"To settle myself," answered Jean, "and what business do you want me to take up? I don't know anything about business."

"You don't understand me, I meant by that, settle yourself in marriage; because when a man is married people regard his future as assured."

"Oh, it was marriage you were talking about. The deuce take it! what the devil does it matter to me if I have thought about it? At my age, shouldn't I look like a confounded fool to marry?"

"Why should you? You will be twenty years old in five months, and then you look so sensible."

"I am hardly sensible, however."

"Marriage will render you more sedate, quieter. When a man has a wife, some children, it gives him occupation; in fact, it affords an interest that nothing else gives. Besides, it would give me so much pleasure to see you in your household."

"Oh, well, we shall see. You have only to arrange all that with my godfather; and provided that I don't have to pay any court or compliments, and that the woman pleases me, why then it is all the same to me. I am ready to marry her."

"You are charming! Oh, my dear Jean, do me the kindness not to dine out tomorrow. I have

some people, some friends coming, and I wish that you should be here."

"Oh, if you are to have company, and if it is necessary to sit still, make small talk, and behave ceremoniously, you know how that bothers me."

"No, there will be no ceremony; these are people who are very plain, very cheerful. You can say anything that you wish. Your godfather will also dine with us."

"Well, all right, but if the individuals weary me or bore me, I warn you that I shall leave immediately."

The day of the dinner came. At four o'clock Bellequeue was at Madame Durand's. He had put on his black coat and his shoes with buckles; Jean, on perceiving this, remarked,—

"Why the devil do you dress like that to come and dine with us? You are squeezed and pinched, you look like an idiot."

"My dear fellow, it is always necessary to be careful as to one's dress when one goes into society."

"And are we in society, we others?"

"Certainly, my dear fellow; besides, your mother is expecting company, the Chopard family."

"Who are they, this Chopard family? I don't know the people at all."

"They are very honest people, rich, retired from business."

"That was not what I asked you. What does it matter to me whether they are rich or poor. Are they cheerful? jolly company?"

"Oh, very jolly. Chopard is the life and soul of a party; he is a great hand at puns."

"Does he smoke? does he play skittles?"

"Oh, as for smoking, it is probable that he has not come to the age of fifty without smoking; finally, he is a lover of good cheer, and his wife laughs almost as much as your cousin Aglae—and as to their daughter—"

"Oh, there is a daughter, is there?"

"And a very fine daughter. You shall tell me what you think of her. A woman who possesses an astonishing amount of knowledge and learning and other desirable qualities. She knows how to make all possible liqueurs."

"That's not bad, that isn't."

"We shall have Madame Ledoux also," said Madame Durand, "she is getting old, but she is such a good woman."

"Oh, yes," said Jean, "she'll talk to us again about her husbands and her children."

"No, for some time past she has spoken less of them, because she always gets so mixed up. She is beginning to lose her memory, she is over seventy years old now."

Before the people arrived, Bellequeue wanted to put Jean's hair in papers, but the latter would not consent to it. He declared that his hair was

all right as it was, and despite all his godfather's efforts he would not retie his cravat.

The Chopard family arrived. Mademoiselle Adelaide was dressed very grandly. Despite her rather thick eyebrows and resolute face, she was distinguished-looking, and might pass for a fine woman. During the first greetings Mademoiselle Adelaide, although she kept her eyes lowered, had already noticed Jean. As to him, he remained in one corner of the room and looked as if he did not notice that anyone had come. It was necessary that his mother should call to him, saying,—

"My son, come and say how do you do to Monsieur and Madame Chopard."

Jean advanced, half bowed, and said brusquely, "A very good-day to you," then returned to the window, where he stood whistling, while Bellequeue said in a low tone to Chopard,—

"Is he not a fine man?"

"A very fine man," answered Papa Chopard.

"It seems that he is very fond of music," said Madame Chopard, who heard Jean whistling.

"Oh, infinitely so," answered Bellequeue, "he has a way of whistling which sounds as well as the flute."

Mademoiselle Adelaide said nothing; she looked at Jean now and then indifferently, and expected him to come and pay her compliments and say soft nothings to her, like all those who had aspired to her hand; but Jean continued to whistle at the

window, without deigning to turn his head, which appeared very singular to Mademoiselle Adelaide. Madame Durand and Bellequeue did what they could to enliven the conversation. M. Chopard made several puns, and his wife laughed, but their daughter was silent. Madame Ledoux arrived, and that distracted the company. She excused herself for being late, and kissed Jean, saying,—

"He is a man now, and is exactly the picture of — you know whom I mean, neighbor, one of my children whose father was the bailiff, I believe, or the cabinet-maker — no, I think he was the stationer. Really, one forgets; but it's all the same, your son is his exact image."

Catherine came to announce that the dinner was served. They had been awaiting the moment impatiently, for Bellequeue was making vain efforts to sustain the conversation and M. Chopard was racking his brain for another pun.

"Let us take the ladies in," said Bellequeue, rising, and immediately he took Madame Chopard's arm, while M. Chopard conducted Madame Durand and Madame Ledoux. Mademoiselle Adelaide remained alone in the room with Jean, and she expected that he would come and offer to lead her to the table, but Jean as he left the window and saw only Mademoiselle Chopard, contented himself with remarking,—

"Aren't you coming to have some dinner. As for me, I am hungry as a wolf."

So saying, he hastened to seat himself at the table. Mademoiselle Chopard remained greatly surprised at Jean's impoliteness. Bellequeue, who had seen his godson come alone into the dining-room, hastened to go in search of Mademoiselle Adelaide, to whom he said,—

"M. Durand is excessively timid; I am sure that he did not dare to offer you his hand."

"Oh, is he timid? I shouldn't have believed that that was possible."

"He's a very singular fellow, an extraordinary character; you'll see that he does nothing like anybody else."

Mademoiselle Adelaide was placed at the table beside Jean. The latter, who spoke little, did not allow her to lack for anything, but his conversation consisted of uttering from time to time such remarks as these,—

"Do you like that? Do you think that is good? Why don't you drink? You don't drink at all."

To these laconical remarks, Mademoiselle Adelaide responded briefly. She still expected some compliments from her neighbor, but he did not appear to dream of uttering them. Mademoiselle Adelaide found that M. Bellequeue was right, and that Jean did nothing like other people.

The dinner set M. Chopard going; he had already made two puns, on the gherkins and on the bread, which he did not like unleavened.

Madame Chopard laughed fit to split her sides, Madame Durand tried to laugh also; Bellequeue ate and drank like a man who does not dream of marrying; Madame Ledoux always asked what they were saying; Jean hummed while eating, and Mademoiselle Chopard said to Bellequeue,—

"This young man is very gay, he is excessively cheerful."

As Jean did not forget to fill the glasses, and as he took special care to refill that of M. Chopard, the latter said to Madame Durand,—

"Your son appears to me to be perfectly well brought up."

At the second course, Jean recalled what Bellequeue had said to him of Mademoiselle Chopard, then he turned toward his neighbor, and said to her,—

"You know how to make liqueurs."

Mademoiselle Adelaide compressed her lips, and answered rather ill-humoredly,—

"I know how to do some other things, too, monsieur."

"Yes? women's things, I suppose. They have to do something, for they can't, as we do, go about to the cafés or play billiards."

"Oh, I play billiards, also."

"What, really?"

"We have a billiard table at my father's country house, and I have often played with the mayor and the assistant mayor."

"Yes, with the queues short."

"With the longest queues possible. I am somewhat of a musician, too, I play the piano."

"And they wanted to put me to the violin, but music makes me nervous."

"Yes, it distresses the ears. I have learned drawing, I copied some antique models from the bust. I drew a Greek Love that they thought was very fine."

"As for me, I have only made them draw quarterns of brandy — on the bust too."

"I have a great liking for botany, I love to botanize in the fields."

"Oh, the deuce! botanizing, I remember about that; my father used to whip me to make me remember the Latin names of the plants, but it's as much as I can do to recognize a snail."

"But I gave that up for astronomy. Oh, astronomy is a delightful study, to know the names of the stars, to know when Venus appears, and when Saturn retires —"

"He ought to retire when he wants to sleep."

"Charles' wain, the great bear, the shepherd's star."

"Eat some of this cream, I'll answer for it that it is worth more than the great bear."

"But all that is not equal to history, it is so interesting, is history, so amusing. These Greeks, these Romans, these fathers who have killed their sons, and sons who have killed their mothers."

"They must all have had the devil in them."

"That Iphigenia who loved Hector so much, and that Tarquin who carried off Helen; there is nothing more amusing than the siege of Troy."

"My daughter is started off," said M. Chopard in a low tone to Bellequeue, "the scheme is working, you may count it as finished. She won't delay her marriage any longer."

Jean let Mademoiselle Adelaide go on talking and set himself to humming again under his breath. Papa made the corks bounce, and drank Madame Ledoux's health, and that old lady began to be a trifle cheerful. Madame Chopard laughed at her husband's jokes and applauded her daughter's sentences. Madame Durand was delighted at her son's conduct, although he had his elbows on the table; but as they were at dessert, that might pass for an amiable abandon. Finally, Mademoiselle Adelaide began to take a familiar tone with Jean.

They remained long at the table; M. Chopard preferred to be there, and Jean kept him company in touching glasses. Bellequeue saw with pleasure that the affair was going well. The ladies never ceased talking, and after the coffee Madame Ledoux asserted that she had fourteen husbands and that each was the father of three of her children.

Madame Chopard, who thought that her daughter had a fine voice, led the conversation to the subject of singing. M. Chopard said that it was

a very good custom to sing at dessert, because they could thus remain longer at the table. Bellequeue was also of this opinion, and he commenced the concert by singing, "Femmes voulez-vous eprouver," a song which he sang very melodiously, and which he accompanied by smiling at the ladies, and Jean exclaimed after the second verse,—

"Why, godfather, you sing as if you had eaten nothing but honey for a fortnight."

"It's true that's rather sweet," said M. Chopard, "as for me, I am for something gay and lively, like 'Rendez-moi mon ecuelle de bois,' or 'Dans un verger, Colinette,' that will always be fine."

M. Chopard sang several couplets, and Jean accompanied him by whistling and striking on the table with his knife. Later they begged Mademoiselle Adelaide to sing, and she did not need a second asking; she began one air then another, because she never remembered the end. After commencing four songs without finishing them, and breaking down in each one of them, she declared that she would try to know them better another time, and Madame Chopard cried,—

"That comes of knowing too much, everything gets mixed up. My daughter has at least three hundred tunes in her head, and when she must sing she can never remember a whole one; really, she knows too many things."

It was Jean's turn, and he sang a drinking song.

"That's very nice," said Bellequeue, "but for

these ladies we should wish something other than drinking songs."

Then Jean began "La Bequille du pere Barnaba"; but Madame Chopard interrupted after the second verse, exclaiming,—

"I know that, my husband has sung it for me."

She whispered to Madame Durand that it would shock Adelaide's ear. Jean began "Rien, pere Cyprien," and Madame Chopard exclaimed,—

"Oh, we know that one also."

"Why, hang it!" said Jean, "if you don't allow me to finish anything, why do you ask me to sing for you?"

"That's right," said Mademoiselle Adelaide, "you must let this gentleman finish."

To dissipate the ill-humor that was brewing, Bellequeue begged Jean to sing them a round from Béranger. The round was sung, the company sang the chorus, touching glasses, and that put every one into good-humor again. Bellequeue, fearing that Jean would later on sing something broad, was the first to perceive that it was late. The Chopards rose, and in taking leave of Madame Durand invited her, as well as Jean, to come and see them.

CHAPTER XII

A Tête-á-Tête. Jean is Engaged to be Married

Upon their arrival at home, the Chopards did not hesitate to ask their daughter what she thought of M. Jean Durand, and strange as it may seem, this was quite in accordance with their usual custom of waiting until Mademoiselle Adelaide had expressed her opinion before forming their own. The self-assured young woman thought that Jean was unlike any one else she had ever met; and while admitting that his manners were rather original, she asserted that he talked extremely well and conversed on any imaginable subject without being at all at a loss.

"He is quite well-informed," said Madame Chopard. "I gathered that from his very original expressions. He found something to converse with you about that interested you, did he not, my daughter?"

"Why, yes, mamma," answered the damsel confidently, "we discussed several subjects very thoroughly."

"As for me," said M. Chopard, "I think the young man has jolly, frank manners, nor does he

look at all conceited. He drinks deep, and I like that; I don't wish that anyone should call my son-in-law a Boileau. Hey? that's good I hope. 'Boit-l'eau[1]!' ha, ha, ha!"

The fact is, Jean's person had not displeased Mademoiselle Adelaide and, surprised at receiving no compliments from him, she had experienced in secret a vexation which with women is often the beginning of a tender feeling.

For her part Madame Durand questioned her son as to what he thought of Mademoiselle Chopard. Jean seemed indifferent enough, he neither liked her nor disliked her, but her personal appearance was not displeasing to him, and that in itself was much.

Bellequeue, who knew his godson's tastes, kept repeating to him, "With such a wife as that, my dear godson, a fellow would have nothing to do from morning till night. She would manage his household perfectly, and still have time to preserve fruits in brandy and make all kinds of liqueur."

Nothing to do, the idea of that was very pleasing to Jean, who did not know how to do anything. He looked at his godfather smilingly as he said to him,—

"By Jove! the idea of my marrying seems to please you as much as it does my mother. Oh, well, Mademoiselle Chopard will do as well as anybody else."

[1] Boit-l'eau; water-drinker. One of Chopard's far-fetched puns.

Madame Durand kissed her son, and Bellequeue ran to the Chopards to find out what they thought of his godson. He was not very tranquil on that score, for he feared that Jean's ungallant manners would have displeased Mademoiselle Adelaide; and it was with a certain uneasiness that he presented himself at the retired distiller's, whom he found alone and of whom he demanded immediately what he thought of Jean.

"What do I think of him?" cried M. Chopard, "why he is a charming fellow, an original, very well-informed."

"What, you really thought him so?" said Bellequeue, who feared that he had heard wrong.

"Hang it, you tried to make him out ignorant. My daughter saw immediately how the thing stood. I assure you that he is very well-informed; my daughter said so, and she knows all about it."

"Oh, I don't say that he isn't; but with us, you know, he has apparently hidden his talents."

"That is possible, but he hasn't imposed on my daughter, and when she has confirmed a thing — "

"Who the deuce was contradicting you? He wasn't displeasing to her, then?"

"Quite the contrary. But he must come to see Adelaide, he must talk with her."

"That's right, that's very right; I will bring him to see you tomorrow evening."

"Do so. They'll talk and chat together and we oldsters will pretend to notice nothing. In

that way they'll get acquainted as they ought before the knot is tied. Tying the knot, ha! ha! not bad, that, eh?"

"Very prettily put. Tomorrow, then, my dear Chopard, I'll be with you. After that I think we may call our matter settled."

"By Jove, I think so too."

Bellequeue departed delighted. He returned home beaming, and Mademoiselle Rose perceived that something had happened. Young girls are curious; besides the young maid exercised a certain authority over her master, she must know everything that he did. She quickly asked him what had happened.

"Oh, it is nothing," said Bellequeue with a malicious air.

"You are not telling me the truth," said Mademoiselle Rose, "I can see it in your face. You can't deceive me. I want to know what has made you so pleased; I want you to tell me everything or I shall pull your hair."

This anger made Bellequeue smile, he turned away, saying to himself, "By Jove, isn't she jealous? She is worse than an African. If she should meet me with a woman I am sure that she would carry her jealousy to excess."

"Well, monsieur," said Rose, "have you decided to answer me?"

"My dear little girl, I am going to tell you all, but you are so very hasty."

"I am as I was made. Make an end of it."

"Well, then, I have just settled a little affair satisfactorily, and it is that which has given me pleasure."

"And what was this affair?"

"Oh, my godson's marriage."

"A marriage for M. Jean? and is it him you are going to marry?"

"Undoubtedly, and why should he not marry, a young man of twenty years, twenty years and a half soon."

"All the same it is not common sense, and he must have lost his head to think of marrying. A young man like him who thinks of nothing but amusing himself!"

Mademoiselle Rose pressed her lips and appeared in a very bad humor. Bellequeue assumed a severe tone, and answered her,—

"My dear, keep to your own affairs, and don't allow yourself so unconventional an expression of opinion again, I beg of you."

Rose was silent and returned to her kitchen. During the whole day she said nothing more, but the fowl was scorched, the cutlets were burned to a cinder, the soup stuck to the bottom of the pot, and the joint was spoiled. Bellequeue made a very poor dinner, but he said to himself, "Poor Rose, I spoke to her too severely, and that has made her feel so bad that she has neglected her cooking." Putting off to another moment the

appeasing of Mademoiselle Rose, and full of the business which he was eager to terminate, Bellequeue after dinner took his hat, and in place of playing a game of draughts with his maid he went to Madame Durand's to inform her of the favorable disposition of the Chopard family. She was not at all surprised that her son had pleased.

"I knew very well," said she to Bellequeue, "that my son had but to show himself to turn their heads. Mademoiselle Chopard should be very highly flattered that Jean is willing to take her for his wife."

"No doubt," said Bellequeue, "my godson is a very fine young man; but you must understand, so far as knowledge is concerned, I did not expect that they would find him well-informed."

"And why should they not?" cried Madame Durand. "Have you taken my son to be a fool up to the present?"

"No, my dear friend, it is not that, but—"

"Well, what then? You are like his father, who said that he knew nothing. As for me, I have always found that he knew everything. Do you think a boy with any mind needs to learn things in order to know them? It is mere jealousy that causes you to think so. Imbeciles who are not troubled with too much wit must do as others do."

"You are right, assuredly, but—"

"But, my dear Bellequeue, I tell you that my son could win a princess if he wished to."

"I have no doubt of it, my dear friend; but let us confine ourselves to Mademoiselle Chopard, who is not a princess, it is true, but who I am certain will render my godson very happy."

"Oh, I have no doubt of it, and this marriage suits me very well."

"In that case, will you tell Jean that he is to come tomorrow evening to the Chopards?"

"Don't be uneasy, he will make no objection to going there."

Bellequeue left Madame Durand, muttering to himself as he went,—

"So my godson Jean is a very well-informed young man! I suppose it must be so since they all assert it, though I was not aware of it. The principal thing now is, however, that the marriage should be settled. When that is done I shall be easier in my mind; I shall not have to run from one to the other all day long and can have a quiet game of draughts with Rose, who, having no subject for jealousy, will not let my dinner burn again."

Madame Durand told her son that they owed a visit to the Chopard family, and that Mademoiselle Adelaide would have much pleasure in talking with him, because she had perceived that he was very well-informed.

"Then it is easy to make her take canary birds for eagles," said Jean, "and that makes me think that this young lady, who steeps everything in brandy, is rather stupid in reality. You know very

well that I know nothing, mother, except to smoke, to swear, to drink and play billiards."

"You are very modest, my dear, you don't even know yourself what talents you possess."

"Oh, as to that, I confess that I do not believe myself to possess a single one."

"Well, you are coming to the Chopards, are you not?"

The word "visit" had been detested by Jean, who was a stranger to all the usages of society and embarrassed in a drawing-room, where he could not conduct himself as he could in a smoking-room. However, vanquished by his mother's solicitations, and having perceived besides that with the Chopards one might be quite at his ease, Jean consented to go to their house on the next evening.

The Chopards, who expected Madame Durand and her son, had invited some friends to play "vingt-et-un," wax candles took the place of tallow ones, the covers of the armchairs and the sofa had been taken off, and they showed forth in all the brilliancy of old-blue brocaded satin, which during sixteen years had not been exposed to daylight more than six times. They had dressed for the occasion. Mademoiselle Adelaide had spent a good deal of time in doing her hair, since she experienced for the first time a very lively desire to please, and, for the first time also, feared lest she should be unsuccessful in doing so. Finally,

M. Chopard had ranged upon the sideboard a dozen little glass jars containing his daughter's chemical productions which he never failed to put in evidence when an occasion presented. Three neighbors had already arrived, and Mademoiselle Adelaide pouted because it was past seven o'clock and M. Jean had not yet come. The bell soon rang, however, and Bellequeue's voice was heard as he came in with Madame Durand on his arm. A kitchenmaid came to announce them, but Jean held her back by her apron, saying, "We can announce ourselves very well. Do you think that they won't recognize us?" and making the servant half turn to the left, he entered the drawing-room, still having his hat on his head, and going up to Papa Chopard slapped him on the shoulder, saying,—

"Well, how are you, old boy?"

M. Chopard turned and perceived Jean, who had on an overcoat, muddy boots, a colored cravat and no gloves. All the efforts of his mother and of Bellequeue had not induced him to change his clothes, but as Mademoiselle Adelaide thought M. Jean well-informed and original, Papa Chopard was not at all put out by the lack of ceremony which the young man had exhibited in coming to the house. Taking him by the hand, the old gentleman exclaimed,—

"Good-evening, professor," then turning to his friends, M. Chopard whispered to them,—

"You notice the negligent dress of this young

man, it's the result of his originality. Savants never take pains with their toilets, it is the last matter for consideration with them."

"In that case," said one of the neighbors to another, "this young man ought to be very well-informed indeed."

Mademoiselle Adelaide did not appear entirely satisfied with Jean's negligence, but she rose, expecting him to come and pay his homage, though Jean did not dream of so doing. He paused before the jars, and exclaimed as he punched M. Chopard on the chest,—

"Are we going to swallow all that this evening? Confound it, if we do we shall have to take a cab home."

Bellequeue, who perceived that Mademoiselle Adelaide was biting her lips with anger, waiting for Jean to go and greet her, softly drew his godson by his overcoat, whispering to him,—

"Go and say good evening to Mademoiselle Chopard."

"Why, sure enough," answered Jean aloud, "the devil carry me away if I hadn't forgotten her."

And turning towards the sofa, on which the young lady had reseated herself, Jean threw himself heavily beside her, exclaiming,—

"Well, now, princess, what have you got to say to us this evening?"

Mademoiselle Adelaide, astounded at hearing

herself called princess by a man whom she saw now for the second time, was for a moment unable to answer; but M. Chopard, who had overheard Jean, said in a low tone to his wife,—

"He has called our daughter princess. That's the sort of courting."

"Don't appear to notice anything," returned his wife, "but let us get away from the sofa so that they can talk more freely."

"Yes," said Bellequeue, "if we take no notice of them I believe that it will be much better."

The parents went towards a table at which they were making up a party for vingt-et-un. The sofa being at the other extremity of the drawing-room, the young people were almost alone, and could talk without being heard by the rest of the company. Mademoiselle Adelaide, rendered rather uneasy by Jean's tone and manners, had lost her habitual assurance, and knew not what to say. She lowered her eyes, and breathed a faint sigh.

"Has your dinner disagreed with you?" said Jean looking very closely at her.

"Certainly not, monsieur," answered Mademoiselle Chopard quickly, "does one sigh only when one has eaten too much?"

"By Jove! I should have thought so. Well, it is true that I sometimes take a long breath, when I am bored, for example."

"But, monsieur, I am not bored, I beg you to believe it."

"If you were bored beside me, whom you hardly know, would that be very extraordinary?"

"Monsieur, when one is well brought up, one is never bored in society."

"Is it then because I have been badly brought up that I am bored so often?"

"Oh, you are saying that for a joke."

"No, may the lightning strike me if it is not true."

"It is going very well," said M. Chopard to Bellequeue in a low voice, after glancing at the sofa, "they appear very animated, I am sure that they are discussing some interesting subject."

"Yes, I see they are taking to each other in an extraordinary manner," answered Bellequeue, who in his joy asked for more cards, although he already had twenty-four, and did not perceive that he had more than his share.

After a moment's silence, Jean, who liked to go to the point, said to Mademoiselle Chopard,—

"By the way, I believe that they desire to marry us."

Mademoiselle Adelaide turned as red as a cook, and murmured,—

"Why, monsieur, why, really, I don't know anything about that."

"Why, by Jove! I should have thought they would have spoken to you, as they did to me. But it is all the same, now I have told you, you know it, and we can talk about it; for really, if

we are going to marry, it is necessary that we should become a little acquainted. What do you think of the arrangement?"

"Me, monsieur? I think — I don't know, really, you broke it to me so suddenly."

"It seems to me unnecessary to take three hours to say such a simple thing as that. What suits one does not suit another."

"But one can't say all that one thinks on the spur of the moment."

"And why not? I should like very much to know just where I stand, because I will confess to you that I had never thought at all about marrying. It is my mother and my godfather who are incessantly dinging in my ears that it will be well for me to do so, that it will render me more steady. It seems to me that I am not unsteady now; but as to that, if they want me to, I shall marry. And how is it with you?"

So singular a declaration upset all Mademoiselle Adelaide's ideas, used as she was to hearing her admirers say, "I adore you, I cannot be happy except with you." She had as yet every expectation that Jean would follow the same course; and so she was at a loss to find an answer to what he had said to her. Tired of seeing Mademoiselle Chopard remain silent, simpering, rolling her eyes to right and left, Jean squeezed her knee familiarly, as he said to her,—

"Don't you understand what I am saying?"

Mademoiselle Adelaide quickly put away his hand and recoiled from him in confusion, as she said,—

"Why now, monsieur, what can you be thinking of? Really, I am not accustomed to allow any one to take such liberties at all; and all that you have said to me appears very singular. No one has ever talked to me or touched me in that way before."

Jean looked at the young lady and burst into a great shout of laughter, which considerably augmented the confusion of poor Mademoiselle Adelaide, and caused her father to say confidentially to Madame Durand,—

"Your son has taken fire like a Lucifer match. Do you see how he is talking to my daughter? Vingt-et-un right off— that will double my gain. I had played two farthings; it's a very pretty stroke."

When Jean had ceased laughing he ventured to draw quite close to Mademoiselle Adelaide, and said to her,—

"And did you think I came here to make love to you? That's not the way it is at all. I came to marry you, if you care to agree to that; as for love and all that kind of thing, it's unnecessary for you to bother yourself so far as I am concerned. If it don't please you on that basis let's say no more about it. It is our parents who have this idea, but we can do as we choose."

"Why, monsieur, if we are to marry, mustn't we be in love with each other first?"

"I don't believe that to be absolutely necessary. As for me, I should be lying if I said to you that I am in love."

"That is very gallant."

"Would you rather I should say that I am and not mean it?"

"I wish that you should be so; it seems to me that is not so difficult."

"Oh, it is very difficult to me. As to being gallant and saying soft things and making love, I know nothing about that; also, to go straight to the point, I don't like coquettes or prudes. You see me as I am. Well now, you reflect on your parents' plan. There is no haste, give yourself time. Now I am going to taste a little of what is in your jars, because I shall be delighted to appreciate your skill in preserving."

So saying Jean arose and, taking from the sideboard a jar full of cherries, exclaimed,—

"Papa Chopard, is there no means of tasting this? No doubt you didn't put these jars in evidence for us only to have a look at them."

"Certainly not," said M. Chopard, leaving the card table, after having said in a low tone to his neighbors, "A continuation of this young man's originality."

And calling a servant, he made her bring some glasses and open the jar, saying to Jean,—

"You tell me how you like them? There are no such fruits in brandy as those you see there. It would be wiser for you to swear that you will take none of them, for they won't help you to preserve your vows. Ha, ha, ha! that is famous, that is, to preserve your vows. Madame Chopard, you must try to remember that."

Madame Chopard laughed until she cried, and all the players left the vingt-et-un table, because they much preferred tasting the cherries to saying, "I take it," or "I pass," which, however, affords very good recreation, above all when one is playing vingt-et-un at two farthings.

After the cherries, Jean proposed to test another jar, then a third, and as at each new taste the society addressed flattering compliments to Mademoiselle Adelaide, the Chopards were delighted and willingly dispensed their liqueurs; but Madame Durand, fearing they would harm her son, begged that they should continue vingt-et-un.

They resumed their play. Jean walked about the drawing-room, watched the play, sang or whistled under his breath, and Mademoiselle Adelaide, still seated on the sofa, looked from time to time at him, saying,—

"Heavens, what a singular young man! who would believe that he is in love with me and desires to marry me? For he is certainly in love with me, though he doesn't want to confess it, M. Bellequeue said he was to papa."

Perceiving that it was in vain for her to expect Jean to come and sit beside her again, Mademoiselle Adelaide decided to go and chat with him. She arose and assumed a cheerful manner, his least word she answered with peals of laughter, and she condoned his rather free manners on the ground that it was necessary to excuse something in such an original.

The party broke up, the parents were delighted and parted in very good-humor. On the way home Madame Durand asked her son again if he had been pleased with Mademoiselle Adelaide, and Jean answered that the young person would make a very good wife.

The Chopards had also interrogated their daughter to know if young Durand was still to her taste, and although Jean had not been very gallant to Mademoiselle Adelaide, although he had spoken to her very cavalierly, Mademoiselle Adelaide answered her parents,—

"Yes, certainly, he pleases me greatly, and I am very much disposed to be his wife." And the young person went to her room saying, "He didn't pay me a single compliment; but all the same, I like him. Besides he is in love with me, and if he doesn't want to tell me so it is merely a stubborn desire to appear indifferent."

Bellequeue, who was still fearful lest Jean should change his mind, thought it wiser to profit by his placability and make it impossible for him to refuse

Mademoiselle Adelaide's hand. He was incessantly running back and forth between the Chopards' and Madame Durand's. Every time he saw Mademoiselle Adelaide he said to her, "My godson thinks of nothing but you, he talks of you all the time, your image pursues him even when he is playing billiards, and you are the cause of his making false strokes."

To Jean Bellequeue said, "You have evoked a tremendously strong feeling in Mademoiselle Chopard's heart, she dreams only of you. Last night she dreamed that she saw you changed into a turtle-dove —" Jean laughed, Mademoiselle Adelaide smiled, and the Chopards said,—

"If the young man is so much in love, why doesn't he come to see us?"

"It is mere singularity of disposition," said Bellequeue, "he cannot resolve to make love like everybody else."

However, by means of running from one to the other, Bellequeue again brought Jean and Mademoiselle Adelaide together. The latter blushed very much on seeing young Durand, the parents looking on with great satisfaction, while Bellequeue pushed his godson, who stood tranquilly in the middle of the room, whispering to him,—

"Take Mademoiselle Adelaide's hand, it is the custom when one has honorable intentions."

"Come," said Jean, "if that is the custom, I am very much in favor of it."

And advancing to Mademoiselle Adelaide, he took her hand, and squeezed it like that of an old friend. Bellequeue immediately clapped Chopard on the breast, exclaiming,—

"That's done, they are engaged."

"Yes, these dear children are engaged," said Madame Durand, kissing Madame Chopard; while M. Chopard cried, "This is the knot of love, ha, ha, ha."

Jean retained Adelaide's hand, and she did not dream of withdrawing it until Papa Chopard went to look for a jar of apricots to celebrate the betrothal, and then Jean relinquished the young lady's hand for the apricots. They drank, they touched glasses, they sang, the evening passed very gayly; they kissed as they parted, and all along the road Bellequeue kept repeating to Jean,—

"You are engaged, there is no going back. You may already look upon Mademoiselle Chopard as your wife."

"So be it," said Jean, "but the devil carry me away if I expected to be betrothed because I shook hands with a young lady."

The remembrance of his betrothal did not prevent Jean from sleeping. As for Bellequeue, he went home delighted, and exclaimed as he put on his dressing-gown,—

"That's done, there is no drawing back now, they are betrothed."

"Who are betrothed?" said Mademoiselle Rose.

"Why, hang it, my godson, Jean Durand with Mademoiselle Adelaide Chopard."

"And a fine marriage he'll make," muttered Mademoiselle Rose, taking her candle.

"Rose, a game of draughts, just one game; I am sure that I shall play well this evening," shouted Bellequeue to his little maid.

But the latter, without listening to her master, went into her room, saying,—

"Play by yourself, I believe that will amuse me just as much."

CHAPTER XIII

A Nocturnal Event. Jean Rescues a Pretty Woman

Jean had now been engaged for a week to Mademoiselle Chopard. The parents and Bellequeue had fixed the period for the wedding six weeks later than the time first agreed on. In the first place the Chopards pleaded that time was necessary for the preparations for the marriage of their only daughter; and in the second, Mademoiselle Adelaide, being now assured that Jean would be her husband, was not displeased at having time to become more fully acquainted with him, and flattered herself that she should yet succeed in making him lovingly attentive and submissive to her will.

As to the heedless young man he had not taken the trouble to inquire as to the time fixed for his wedding; as he was not in love with his fiancée it mattered little to him whether it was sooner or later. He went to the Chopard's because he was as much at his ease there as he was in his own home; but he talked with Mademoiselle Adelaide as with everyone else, and nothing indicated that he would become more ardent or

more attentive. Mademoiselle Adelaide, on the contrary, felt every day an increased liking for young Durand, and although secretly vexed that he did not show himself more in love was more than ever taken with him.

The Chopards, being firmly persuaded that he could not see their daughter without admiring her enthusiastically, did not question Jean's sentiments and attributed his coldness when near her to the singularity of his disposition. Every time the young man came to see them they did not fail to have him sample the bottles, while hearing all about the accomplishments of their daughter. Jean approved of this procedure and Madame Chopard ran to her daughter to whisper to her,—

"Your betrothed has eaten some of your peaches preserved in brandy with the greatest pleasure. That young fellow loves you sincerely, my dear child."

Mademoiselle Adelaide answered nothing, but she sighed and thought that M. Jean did not love her as much as the peaches.

Jean was returning one evening from the Chopards'; it was only ten o'clock, but the streets in the Marais were already deserted. As he was entering the Rue des Trois-Pavillons, he heard the voices of two women, crying, "Thief!" and at the same moment a man passed, running quite near our hero, holding in his hand a shawl with which he was flying. But Jean had already

reached him ; he seized him by the collar, snatched the shawl from his hands, and was about to drag him along too, when the thief said to him, " For pity's sake, don't ruin me ! " The voice of this man was not unknown to Jean ; his hand involuntarily relaxed its hold on the thief's collar, the latter darted off, and Jean then ran towards the two ladies who had called for help. These ladies, whose dress was elegant and their carriage distinguished, were leaning against the wall trembling ; they had not the strength to walk, and when they saw Jean coming towards them an exclamation of fear escaped them, because they believed it was again a robber who was coming to attack them.

Jean reassured the ladies, and gave them the shawl he had taken from the robber, saying,—

" Is that all the rascal took from you ? Hang it, I'm sorry I let him escape. But his voice — it seemed to me that I knew it and, deuce take it, I let him go without realizing what I did."

The ladies overwhelmed him with thanks ; the stolen shawl was a handsome cashmere, and well worthy the trouble he had taken.

" He carried off my bag also," said one of the ladies, " but that is a very slight loss ; it had nothing in it but my purse containing a little silver, a handkerchief, and a souvenir,— which is what I regret the most."

Jean would have run after the thief to take the

bag from him, but the ladies opposed this and begged him not to give himself such unnecessary trouble, and asked him to have the kindness to conduct them to a cabstand.

Jean offered his arms to these ladies, they accepted them, and as they walked along told him how the event had occurred. The ladies had left a house on the Rue des Trois-Pavillons; they had not wished that anyone should escort them, not thinking that at ten o'clock in the evening two women could run any danger in a neighborhood that was never deserted. Besides, they had intended to take a cab at the nearest stand; but hardly had they taken twenty steps in the street when a man had approached them, had suddenly snatched the shawl and a reticule and immediately taken to flight.

These two ladies to whom Jean was acting as cavalier spoke each in turn and sometimes both together, as people usually do when they are still excited by something that has happened to them. One of the ladies appeared to be about forty years of age, the other seemed still quite young. Both of them overwhelmed Jean with thanks, then said to each other,—

"It is your fault, my dear, that we have been attacked."

"It is yours, you mean, dearest. For three-quarters of an hour I had been wanting to leave."

"Well, you could not expect to get away very

early, we come so seldom to the Marais to see Madame Saint-Luce, and then she was so pleased because we played boston with her. Why, she wanted to send someone for a cab but you wouldn't let her."

"Her maid is so old, she's nearly as helpless as her mistress. I did not want her to take the trouble."

"Happily we came out of it in good order."

"Thanks to monsieur."

"But I was very much frightened."

"And I also. However, I shrieked loudly enough. The loss of the shawl was no great misfortune, but I was afraid that wretch would come back to us and that he would kill us!"

"Ah, monsieur, we perhaps owe you our lives!" To all this Jean replied,—

"Hang it! What I did was quite natural. I only regret letting the rascal go without making him give up the bag. For the matter of that, I can assure you he had no idea of returning to you when I stopped him; on the contrary, he was making off at the top of his speed, and I think must be far enough by this time."

But they reached a cab stand, and the ladies got into one of the vehicles. Jean offered to accompany them as far as their home, if they still felt timid; but they thanked him graciously and again uttered expressions of gratitude for their rescue. To cut this short, Jean wished them good

evening and departed, not waiting for the cab to start.

Jean, who had turned back to escort the ladies, resumed his way home still thinking of his adventure. It was not the ladies, however, who occupied his thoughts, but the thief, whose voice seemed still to echo in his ear and which recalled that of one of his school comrades.

"Can it be possible that that was really Demar?" said Jean to himself, returning slowly down the street up which he had just walked. "Demar a thief! The action which he had committed when I left him showed a leaning towards crime. Miserable fellow! Perhaps he's also led poor Gervais into the committal of similar offences. Where should I be now had I not left them,—and all was to have been in common between us. Why, how foolish to make vows at fifteen — perhaps it would be wise to refrain from making them altogether."

While thus reflecting, Jean again found himself in the Rue des Trois-Pavillons and at the same place where he had stopped the thief. Something shone at his feet, he stooped and perceived a pretty little reticule with a steel chain and tassels. "I'll wager this is that lady's bag!" cried Jean, picking up the reticule. "How is it that we didn't see it when we passed here just now? Oh, hang it! they were talking so much, they stupefied me with their thanks. We had much better have been looking

on the ground. All the same let's take the bag, and if it contains an address these ladies will then have lost nothing." Jean opened the bag and found in it a handkerchief, a purse containing twenty-five francs, and a pretty diary trimmed with steel. "It really seems to be the bag stolen from those ladies; it holds precisely the articles they mentioned. Does it belong to the elder or the younger of them? I don't remember which now, they nearly always spoke both together. I believe, however, it was the younger, for it was she to whom the shawl belonged, and the rascal who attacked them no doubt seized both articles at the same time."

Jean reached home; the adventure had made him late, it was nearly eleven o'clock. Madame Durand had gone to bed. Jean went immediately to his own room and taking the bag from his pocket he drew from it the diary, which he could now examine at his ease.

The diary was covered with violet morocco, the corners being rebound with steel and on the front cover was a plate of the same on which was graven simply the word "Diary."

"That's very nice," said Jean, "this is merely one of those playthings which are necessary to modish women. And these ladies appeared to me to be what they call 'good form.' But Mademoiselle Chopard needn't flatter herself that she'll have any of these pretty gewgaws; I shan't put

her on that footing. Now what use can this serve? That a man should have a pocket-book is well and good; but a woman has no need of carrying notes like a unlicensed broker. Now I'm going to see if the diary contains anything of importance. It's necessary for me to look into it to try to discover the name and address of the one to whom it belongs, since there is nothing to indicate it on the outside. Come, let's run through this modish woman's diary. Who knows but it may amuse me, perhaps. No doubt the lady had no idea that a stranger would read what she has written here with so much frankness. Well, here goes."

Jean placed a light on a table, seated himself near it, lit a cigar, and opening the diary he began to read it, interrupting himself at times to make his reflections.

Madame Derval expects me to breakfast next week. I promised to go, for she has asked me at least six times before and would take no refusal. I shall have to go to put a stop to her insistence. I don't like Madame Derval, she is coquettish, slanderous; she has a caustic wit which wounds while pretending to joke; but in society if one saw only the people that one likes —

"How stupid these society people are," said Jean to himself, "always doing something which is not pleasing to them because it's the custom to do so — while I scoff at all such nonsense. Does she need to go to this Madame Derval's to break-

fast if she can't bear her? But who knows, perhaps she'll call her 'darling!' Let's go on.

Tuesday: Ball at Madame de Bremont's. I must not forget to order a trimming of variegated roses, that of Clotilde was charming. Madame Julien looked very well in her poppy-red toque; I must have one like it. I must send for my bracelets, of which I have had the fastening changed. They are wearing crosses now. My comb is out of fashion.

"Oh, the deuce! this is an article on finery! These ladies are terrible with their dress. I doubted that she was a coquette—they all are. But, Mademoiselle Chopard, if you bother me with a desire for jewels, crosses and combs, I shall beg you to go and make some ratafia. If these tablets are devoted only to matters of dress, they will hardly amuse me. Let us read further, however.

How pleasing and interesting that poor child was. He is called Adolphe; not more than six years old and his mother is a widow and has been ill for three months. Poor people! 238 Faubourg Saint-Martin, in the attics. I will go tomorrow morning.

"For a coquette, that's not bad. She is kind at least. That reconciles me with her a little.

Madame de Bremont's ball was delightful. I did not miss one square dance. M. Valcourt asked me too often—it will be noticed. I really believe he is in love with me. Everybody thought my gown charming. I have promised to give a ball also to please the little Saint-Amands. Those poor little things, they are so fond of dancing. I shall write their cousins, the Dormeuil family, and the Saint-Leons. As for the men, they must not be lacking. They shan't play at écarté, because I wish these young ladies to dance.

"Oh, indeed! but she always says, 'I wish' and never speaks of her husband. Hasn't she got one? No, that won't be the reason. Ah, this isn't the same writing — these are verses, I believe, a song perhaps —

In seeing thee, most lovely Caroline,
How can one fail to love thee?
Thy gentle looks, thy grace divine,
Kindle love's fires within me.

With such a happy gift of pleasing,
So many charms and so much wit,
Why must thy coldness prove so freezing
To a poor wretch who's so hard hit.

"Oh, the deuce! that's fine. That is a declaration if you like. I shall never know how to do it like that. It's a pity, too, for I am sure my fiancée would put herself in brandy if one should say as much to her. Here is something more written underneath, but the pencil marks are almost rubbed out — 'To Madame Dorville, from her most sincere admirer.'

"Madame Dorville is no doubt the name of the owner of the diary — Caroline Dorville — that's it. I must find the address now, it's not a foregone conclusion that that will be inside; but since he calls her 'Madame' she is married, and she allows him to write verses to her — declarations. That's not so bad; I'm not jealous of Mademoiselle Adelaide, but when she becomes my wife I don't believe that I shall be so complaisant as

to allow any idle fellow to address her in such terms as those."

Jean blew a puff of smoke from his cigar and resumed the reading,—

How happy my visit seemed to make these poor people. I restored hope to them, life perhaps; that poor mother who at twenty-five years of age was dying of grief and poverty in an attic. Her son jumped with joy, the mother kissed my hand and embraced her boy, telling him to bless me. And a few louis only were necessary to put an end to the suffering of these unfortunate beings. Ah, I shan't stop there, I shall go and see them again, I shall find some work or a place for this young woman. When I remember how many people there are in the situation in which I found this poor mother, I am ashamed of spending so much money in useless things, in gewgaws. For a mere nothing I was about to throw into the fire this handsome trimming which cost me three times more than I have given to these unfortunate people.

"This is very good indeed! this makes me forget her taste for dress. If she has faults, at least she has qualities which compensate for them. There are many people who could not maintain the balance.

Saturday I dine at Madame Saint-Leon's. A tea on Monday at Madame Dorfeuil's. I must have them reserve a box at the opera for Wednesday. To take my dressing-case to Monbro's. Three new songs by Panseron at Frere's, Passage des Panoramas — they sang them at Madame de la Roche's, they are charming. A new piece with variations for the piano by Hérold. It's a little difficult, but the easy pieces are only played by learners. Madame de Rémond has had her portrait done, it is a perfect likeness, the miniature is charming; the address of the

painter is M. Maricot, 28 Rue Meslay. To ask Constance for her dressmaker's address. To ask Celestine where she gets her bonnets —

"Come; here is some more silly stuff! On the other page she was all feeling, she made some very sensible reflections upon coquetry and now she thinks only of pleasure and adornment. It is indeed a woman's diary — but all this doesn't give me her address. Let's look again.

I must not forget to have a piano sent to my country house, and to tell my gardener to restock all my flower beds.

"Oh, so we have a country house. The devil! everything is in good style.

How peculiar men are! they are continually telling me that I should not remain a widow for another year, and why should I not? Certainly, I have no thought of marrying again. I am free, I am happy. Oh, if I had but had a child, I should lack nothing.

"Oh, we are widowed. I should have divined it; but it appears to me that she doesn't lament the defunct very deeply. Let's read further.

They all court me; even those who are indissolubly bound to others. Those who are free make me laugh sometimes; the others almost make me angry. If I could have a partiality, they suppose me capable in that case of forming a connection with some one who is already bound — but they are so conceited! They think that no one could resist their grace, their wit, their blandishments — and unfortunately they are successful sometimes. I shall never see Madame de P—— again. I liked her companionship so much, but her husband became insupportable, I trembled at every moment for fear his wife should perceive his ridiculous love.

"There are some things that are not bad in that. Every one pays court then to this beautiful Caroline. There's perhaps a little illusion on her part in regard to that. There are some women who think that every one is in love with them if they only hand them a chair. Oh, hang it, if all the men were like me!

Hortense is coming to live in Paris, she has charged me to find her an apartment. There's a very pretty one they tell me in the Rue du Lentier and another in the Rue Richer near the Faubourg Poissonnière, almost opposite my house. I shall go there first.

"Ah, here is what I am looking for. That's very fortunate — Rue Richer near the Faubourg Poissonnière, and the name with that is all that I need to find the owner of this diary. Now, I've read these pages I shan't be sorry to see her again. This evening it was dark, and I hardly looked at her. To sum up, she must be a pretty stylish young woman and a good sort at bottom."

Jean replaced the diary in the reticule and went to bed still thinking of what he had read in it.